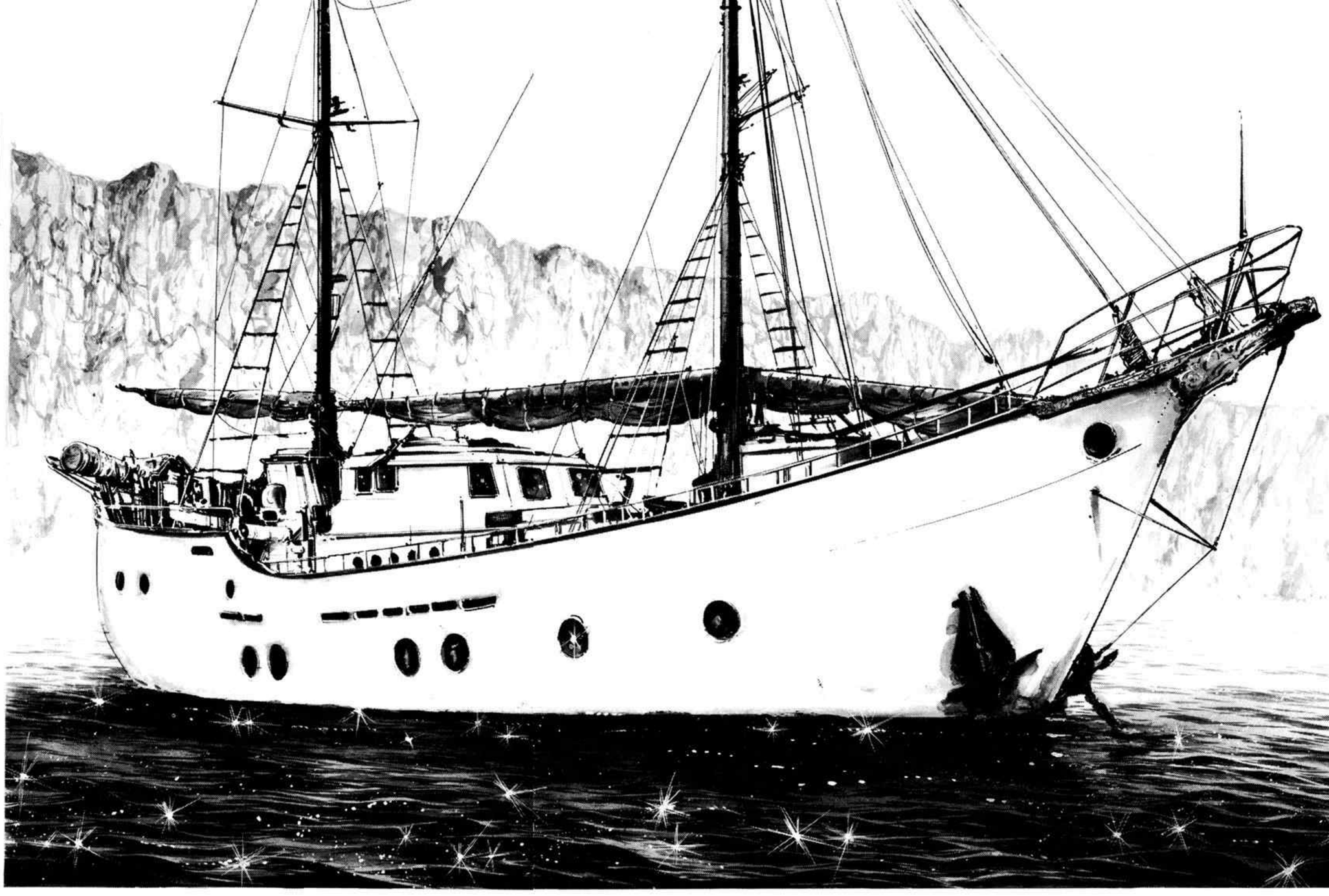
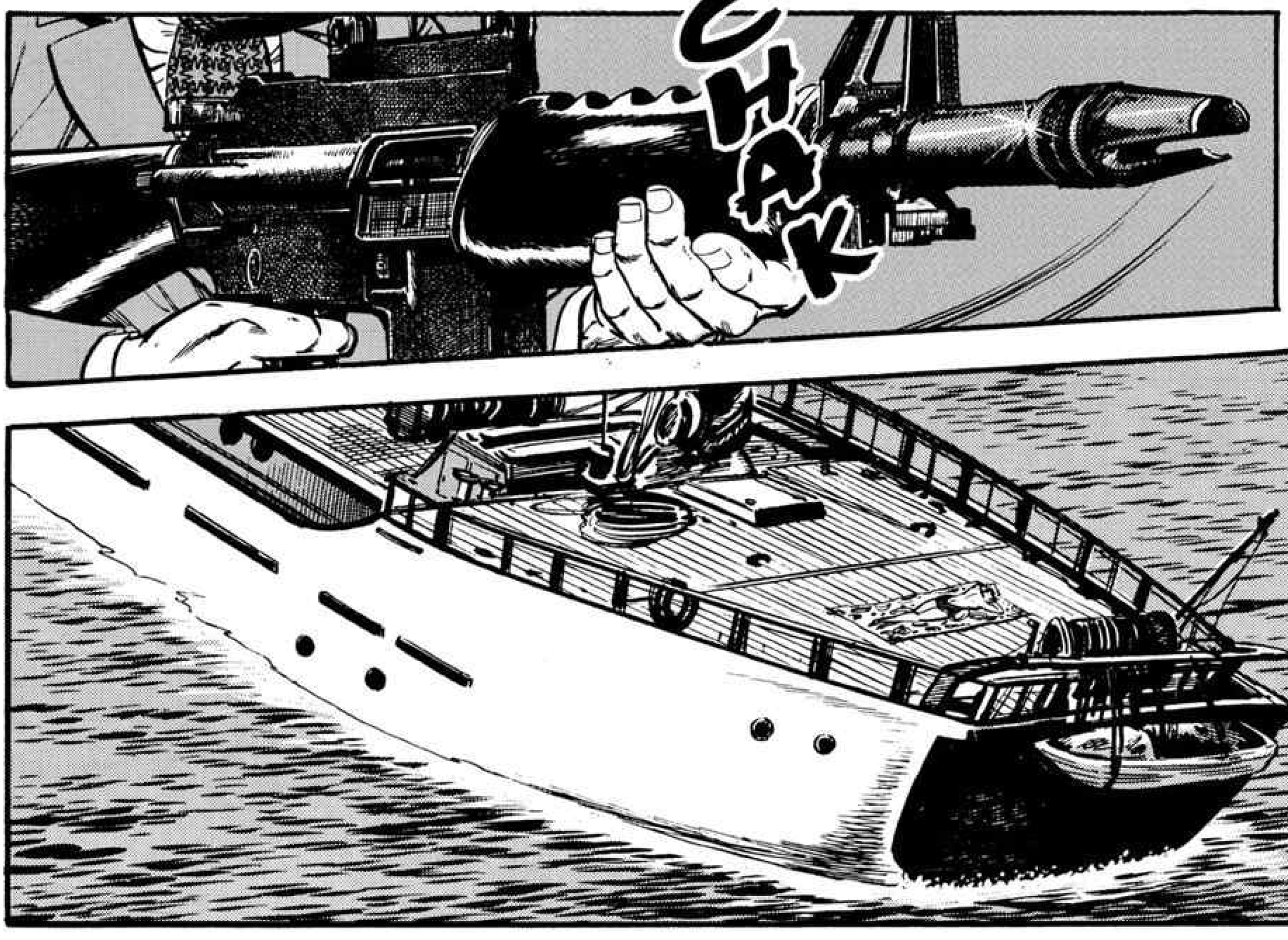
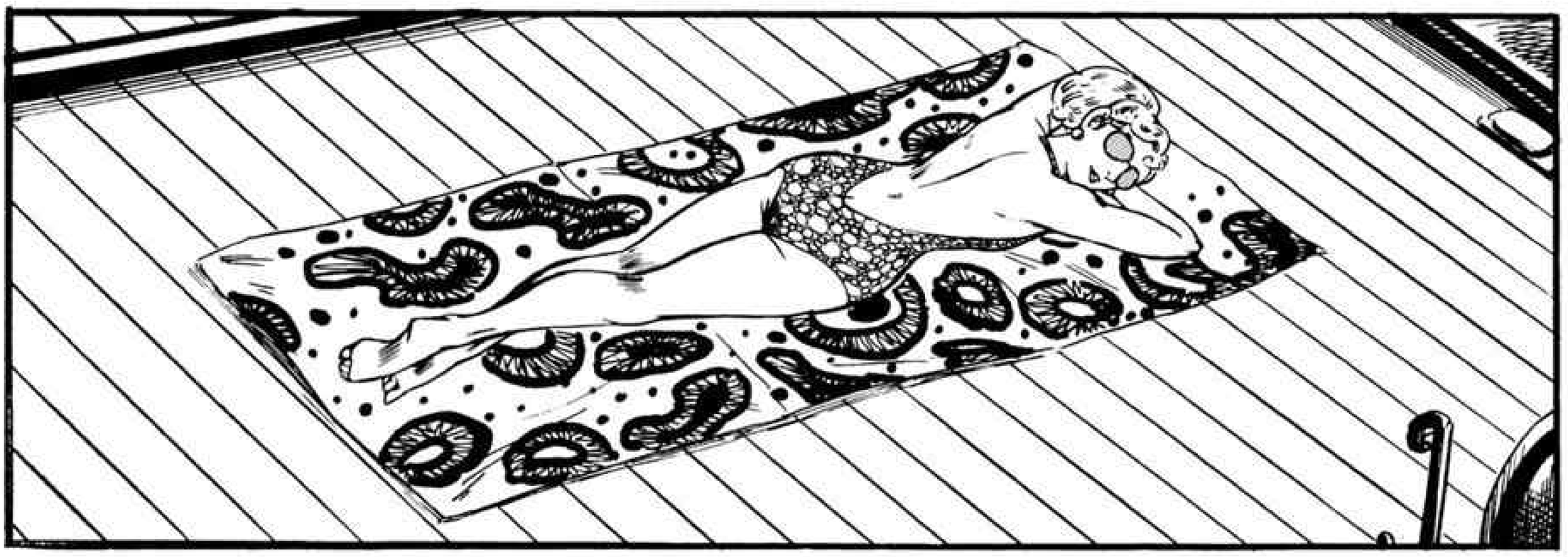
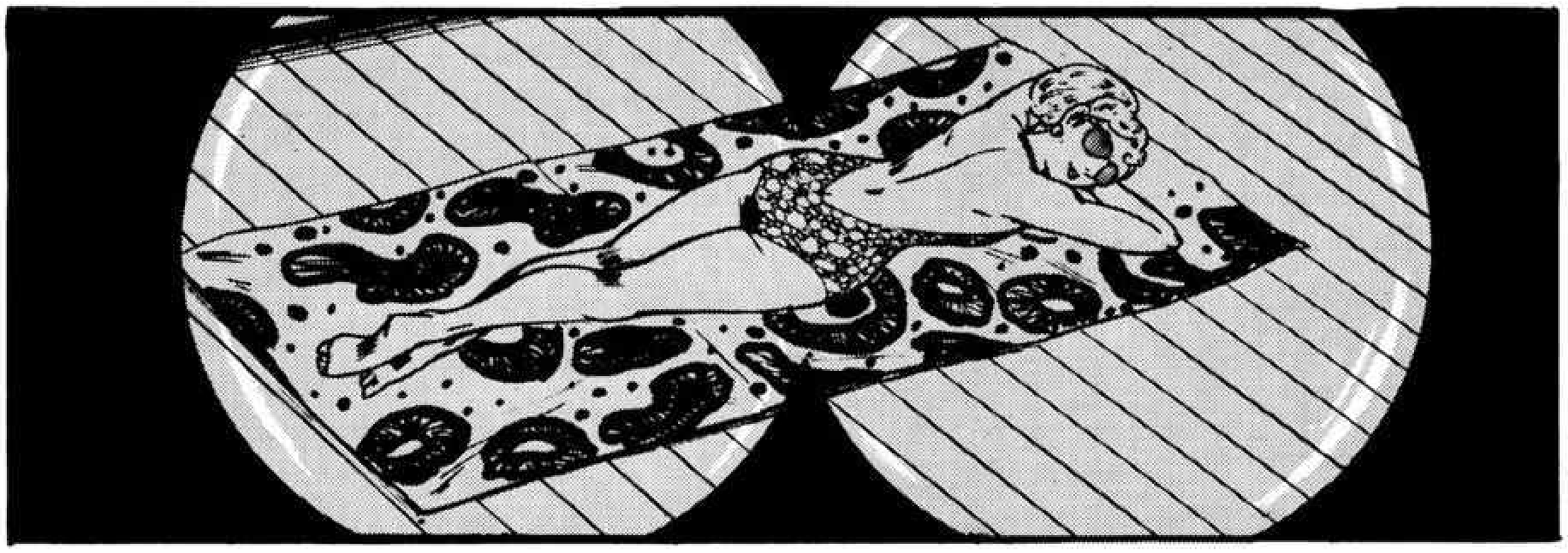


# FAR FR OM AN ERA


CHAK

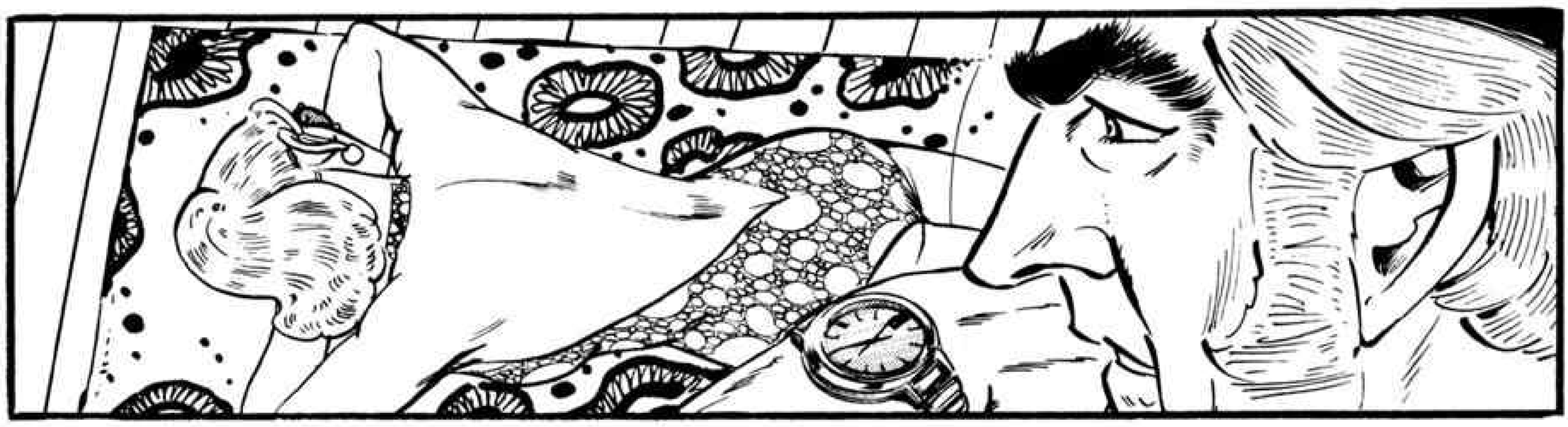


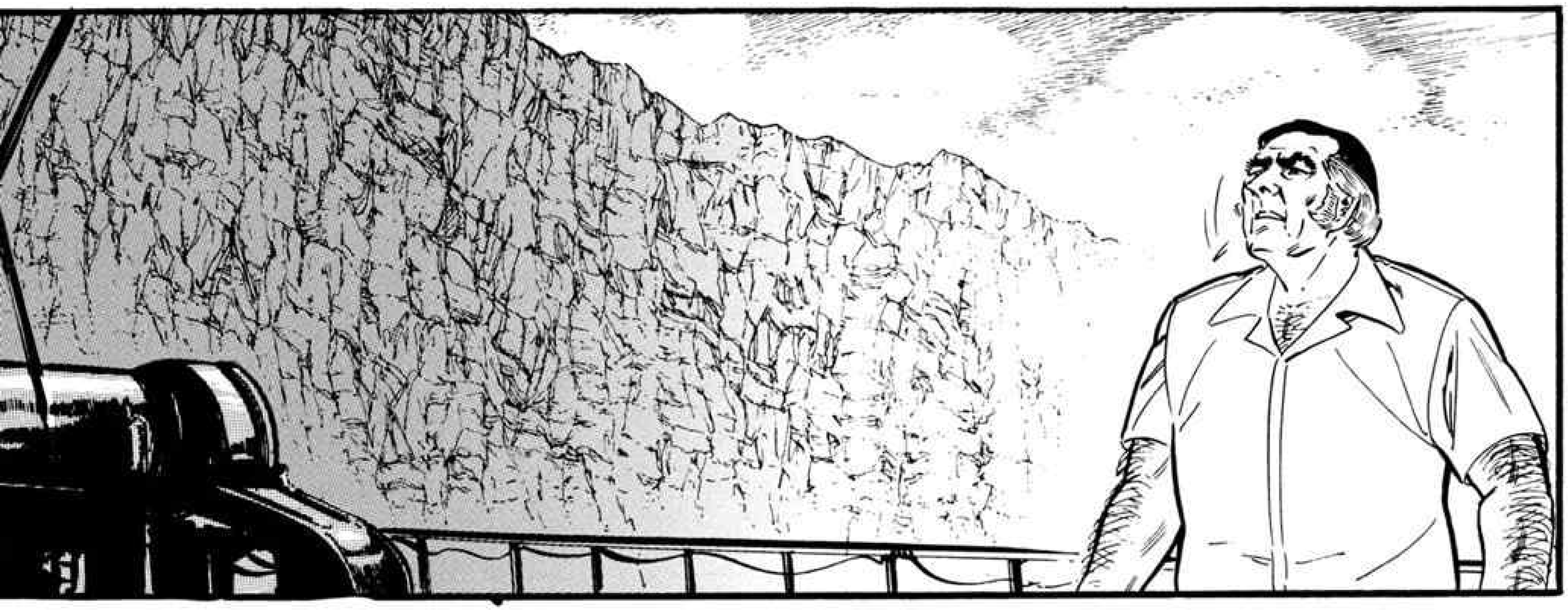


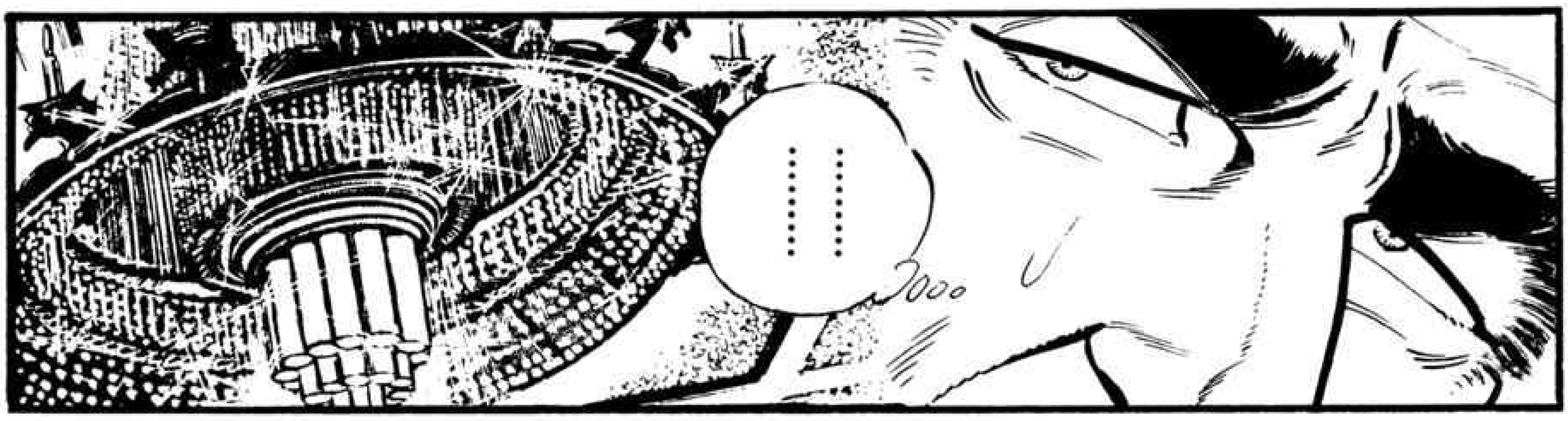
# PART 1 MY WIFE ELEANOR

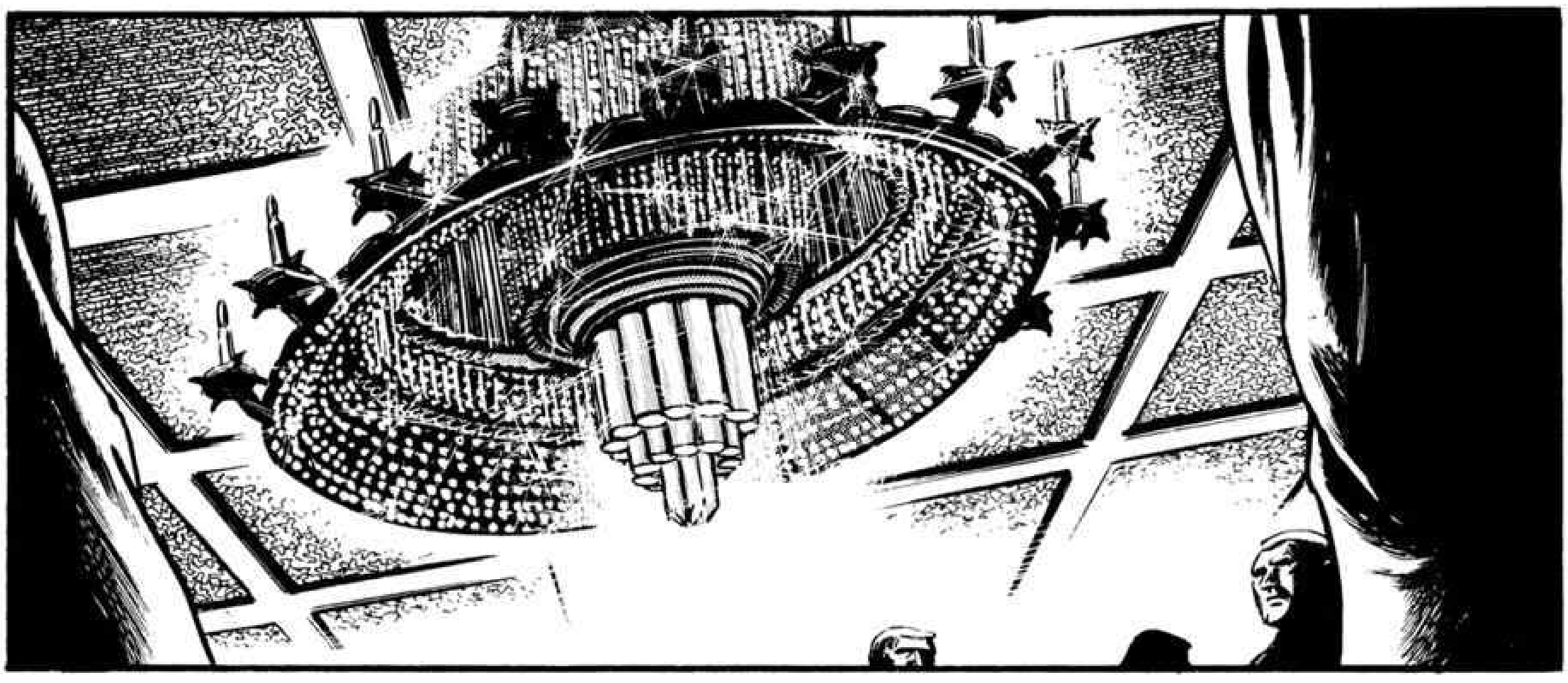
THANK YOU. LEAVE IT THERE.
ELEANOR, I MADE YOU A TOM COLLINS.

.....









VERY WELL...

CHIK
CHIK
CHIK
CLAK
FWIP
FWIP
THERE'S NO NEED TO CALL.
TAK

...YOU.

IT'S...

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, MR. TOGO?

.....

...I JUST SPECIFIED A TIME AND PLACE WHERE YOU WOULD BE... ALONE.

SO...

.....

SOME I HAVE BETTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH THAN OTHERS.

I'VE HAD PROBLEMS WITH SOME OF MY CLIENTS.

IF YOU WERE GOING TO SHOW UP IN PERSON, WHY DID YOU TELL ME TO GIVE YOU A CALL?

Y-YES...

SO LET'S HEAR YOUR STORY.

THIS IS YOUR COMPANY'S ANNI-VERSARY PARTY, MR. WALTERS. THEY'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU DOWN-STAIRS.

I WANT TO BUY A SNIPE FROM YOU, MR. TOGO.

.....

.....

YOU'RE SAID TO BE THE GREATEST MARKSMAN IN THE WORLD. WOULD YOU AGREE WITH THAT?

IT'S ESSENTIAL THAT THIS BE DONE WITH ACCURACY. I'VE BEEN RE-SEARCHING YOU DISCREETLY FOR WEEKS.

THIS "SNIPE" YOU WOULD LIKE TO PURCHASE...

.....

OF COURSE, I WILL PAY YOU A FEE COMMENSURATE WITH YOUR ABILITIES...

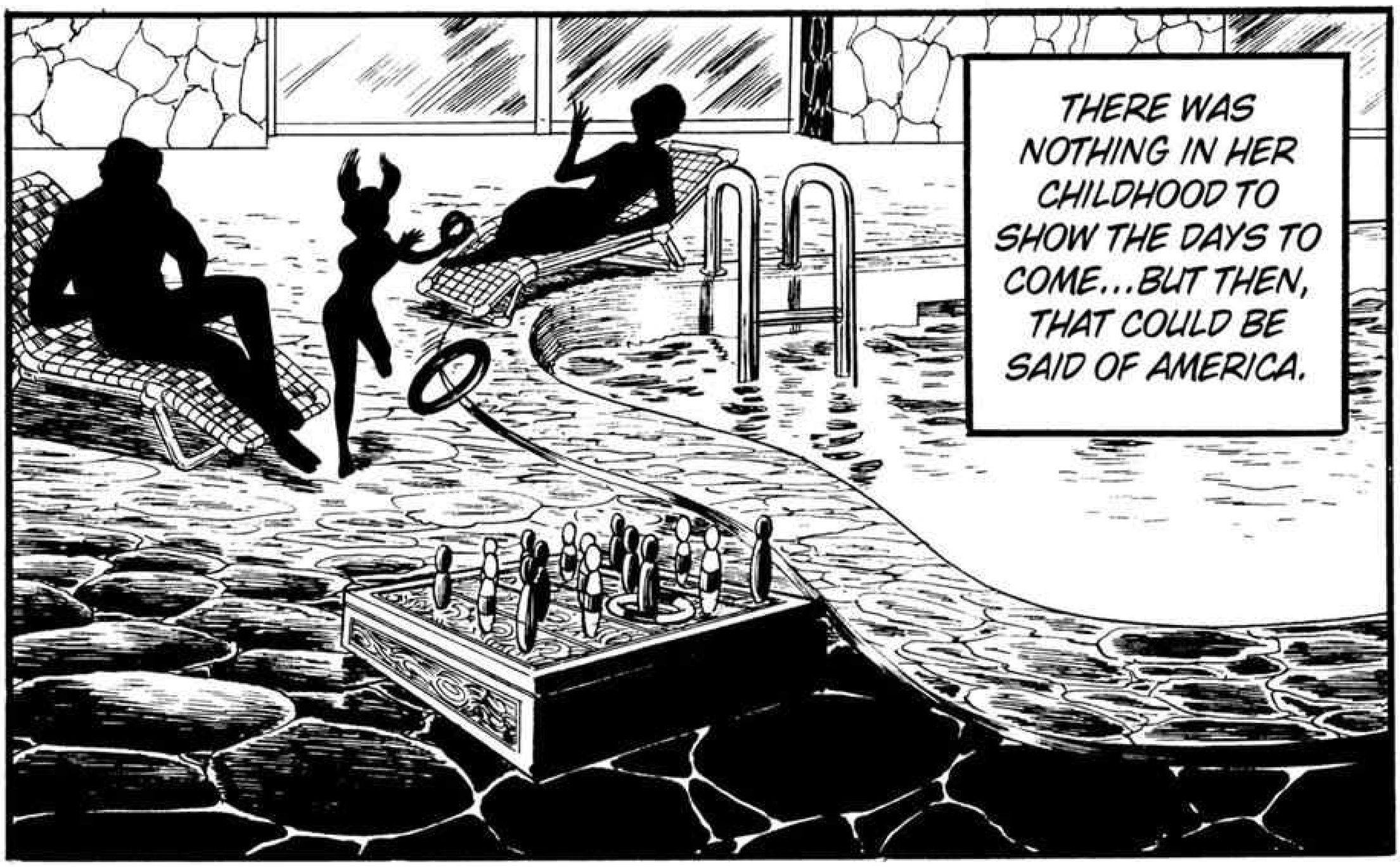
.....

...ELEANOR.

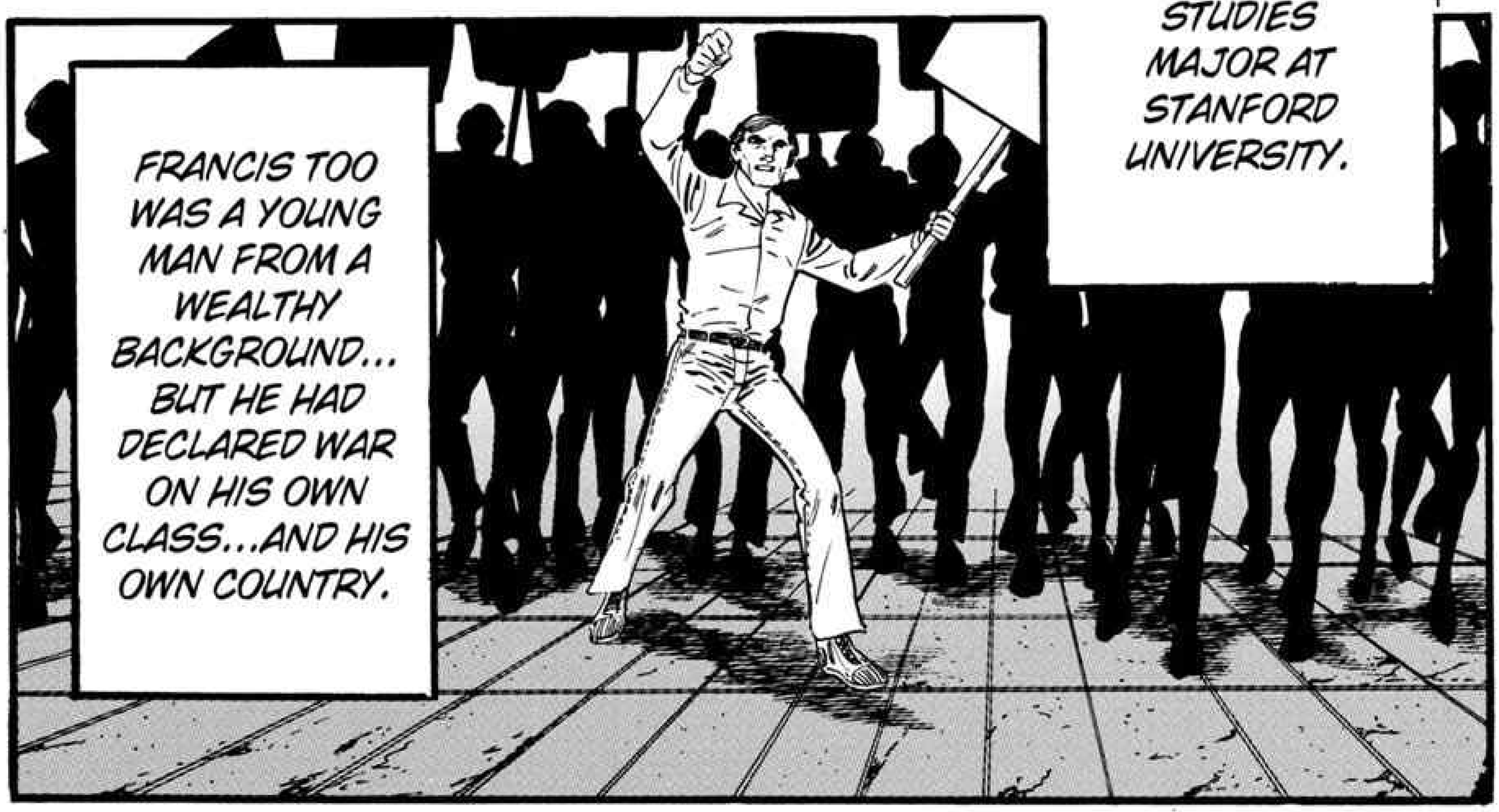
IT'S FOR MY WIFE...

*SHE WAS A CHILD OF THE CALIFORNIA ELITE--HER FATHER, ONE OF THE LARGEST LANDOWNERS IN THE STATE, HER MOTHER, A HOLLYWOOD STAR OF THE 1940s.*

ELEANOR WALTERS.


THERE WAS NOTHING IN HER CHILDHOOD TO SHOW THE DAYS TO COME...BUT THEN, THAT COULD BE SAID OF AMERICA.

IN 1968, ELEANOR MET FRANCIS SHELBY, A BRILLIANT POLITICAL STUDIES MAJOR AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY.


FRANCIS TOO WAS A YOUNG MAN FROM A WEALTHY BACKGROUND... BUT HE HAD DECLARED WAR ON HIS OWN CLASS...AND HIS OWN COUNTRY.

THE NEXT YEAR, FRANCIS TOOK SIDES WITH THE RADICAL **WEATHER UNDERGROUND**, OR "WEATHERMEN" FACTION OF THE LEFTIST **STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.**

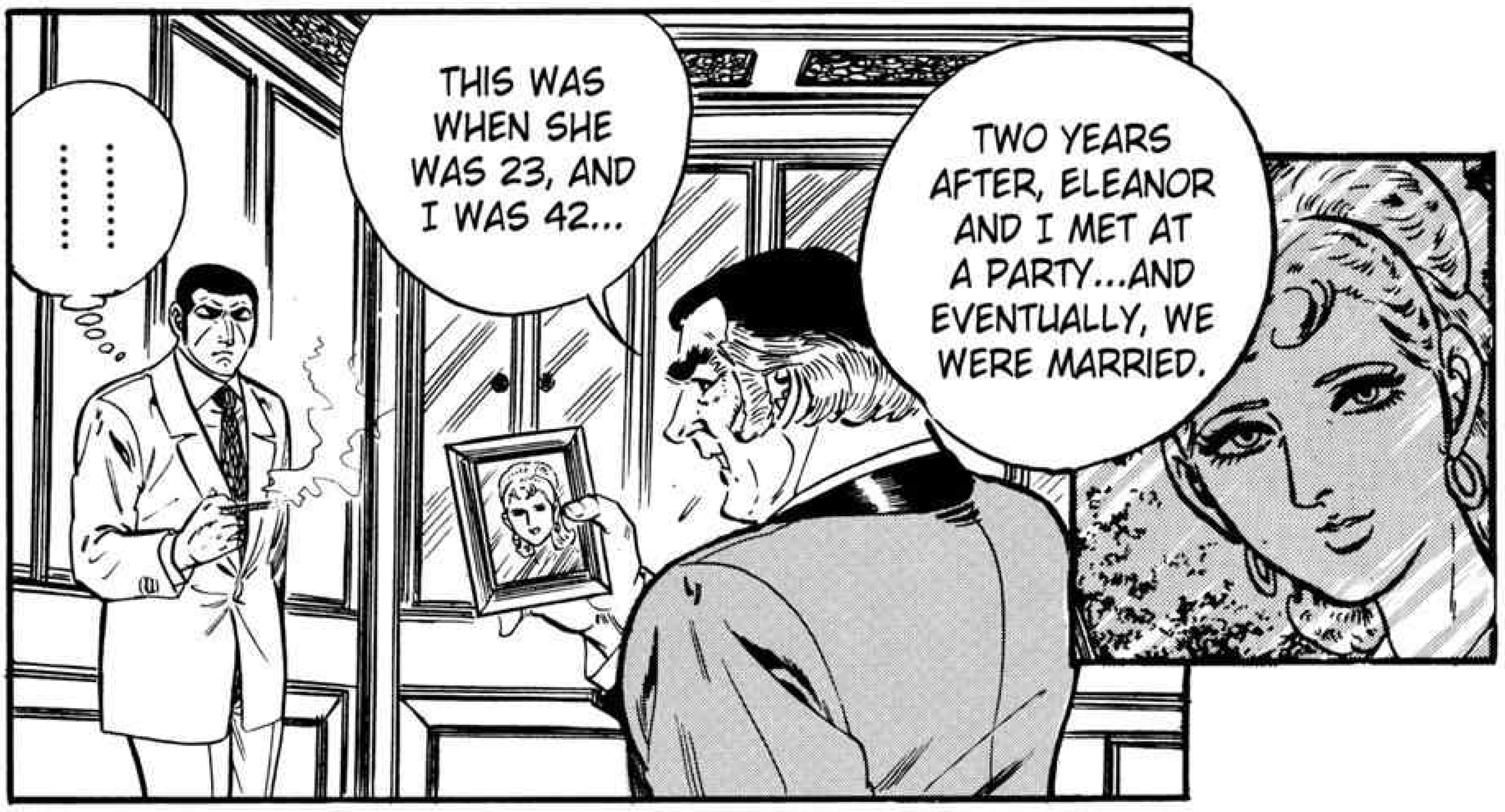
IN FEBRUARY 1970, TWO BOMBINGS AGAINST BAY AREA POLICE WITHIN THREE DAYS-- FIRST BERKELEY, THEN SAN FRANCISCO. FRANCIS SHELBY WAS THE PRIME SUSPECT.

ON DECEMBER 6, 1969, THE WEATHERMEN, BELIEVING IT WAS TIME TO BEGIN THE REVOLUTION, CONDUCTED THEIR FIRST BOMBING AGAINST A POLICE STATION IN CHICAGO.

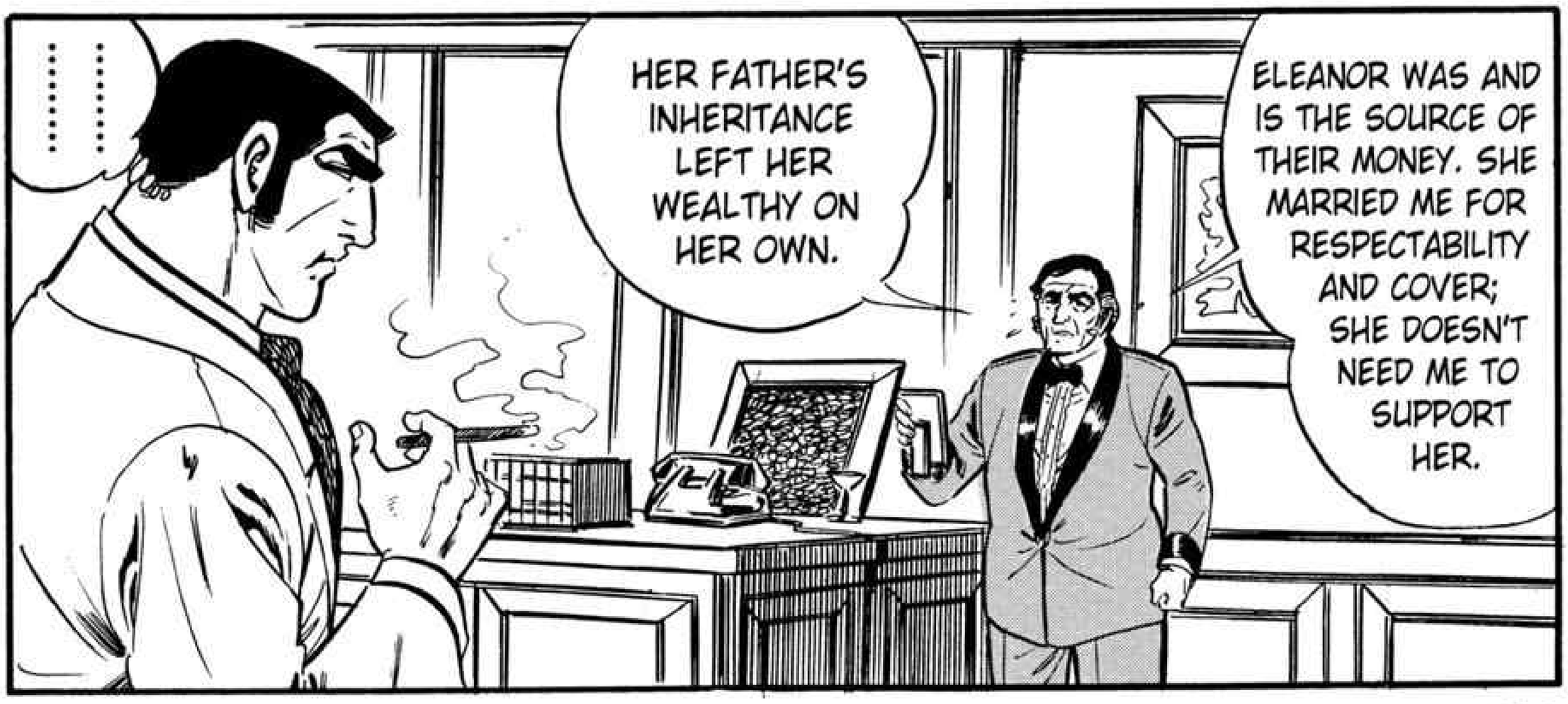
THE SAN FRANCISCO BOMBING HAD KILLED ONE COP AND INJURED SEVERAL OTHERS. THE POLICE DIDN'T WAIT FOR A TRIAL...WIPING OUT FRANCIS AND HIS WEATHERMAN CELL WHEN THEY FOUND IT.

ELEANOR WAS PREGNANT. SHE TOLD ME ONCE SHE CRIED UNTIL EVERYTHING CAME OUT... INCLUDING FRANCIS'S BABY, BORN DEAD.

# PART 2 SIGNAL TO THE LEFT



BUT DESPITE THE POLICE AND GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN, THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND WAS STILL ACTIVE.
CONGRESS STIFFENED THE PENALTIES FOR DOMESTIC TERRORISM.
IT WAS A MAY CEREMONY IN THE WEDDING NOTICES... WHILE ON THE FRONT PAGES, THE WEATHERMEN HAD JUST BOMBED THE PENTAGON.


.....
HER FATHER'S INHERITANCE LEFT HER WEALTHY ON HER OWN.
ELEANOR WAS AND IS THE SOURCE OF THEIR MONEY. SHE MARRIED ME FOR RESPECTABILITY AND COVER; SHE DOESN'T NEED ME TO SUPPORT HER.

.....

...HOW MANY BOMBS HAS HER MONEY BUILT? GOVERNMENT OFFICES, UNIVERSITIES, BANKS?

HOW MANY CORPSES HAS SHE PILED ON THEIR GRAVES, HER SILENT TRIBUTE?

OUT OF LOVE FOR DEAD FRANCIS... OUT OF LOVE FOR THEIR DEAD SON...

I WANT *YOUR* SNIPE...THE ACCURACY ONLY YOU CAN PROVIDE.

A WARNING SHOT, MR. TOGO.

THAT'S WHY I WANT TO HIRE YOU, GOLGO 13.

YOU THINK I WANT TO *HURT* HER, DO YOU? I NEVER WANT HER HURT.

BUT I ALWAYS LOVED HER... I LOVE HER EVEN NOW, EVEN KNOWING WHAT I KNOW.

THE POLICE ARE CLOSING IN ON ELEANOR, YOU SEE.

YOU SAID YOU WANTED A SNIPE.

BUT COPS TAKE CARE OF COP KILLERS...JUST LIKE THEY DID WITH FRANCIS.

THEY WOULD KNOW THAT.

BUT I'M TOO WELL CONNECTED FOR THEM TO ARREST HER. EVEN IF THEY DO, I'D HIRE THE BEST LAWYERS IN THE COUNTRY TO GET HER OFF.

...I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE I'M DOING IT, MYSELF.

MAYBE I CAN SCARE HER WITH A SIGNAL, MAYBE I CAN'T...BUT I'VE GOT TO TRY. SHE'D NEVER DREAM I'D STAGE HER OWN ATTEMPTED MURDER...

AIM FOR HER LEFT EARRING.

THAT'S ALL I ASK.

.....

.....

IT HAS TO BE A SHOT OUT OF THE BLUE, SOMETHING SHE CAN FEEL...THE BAREST ESCAPE FROM DEATH.

HER ONLY CHANCE IS FOR ME TO CUT HER TIES WITH THE WEATHERMEN BEFORE THE POLICE FOLLOW THE TRAIL OF MONEY ALL THE WAY BACK TO ELEANOR.

THAT IS MY OWN DULL BLACK HUMOR.

AH.

WHY THE LEFT EARRING ...?

.....

...ELEANOR'S LEFT EAR...

FRANCIS HAD A HABIT OF BITING...

PLEASE DO THIS FOR ME!

PLEASE, MR. TOGO !!

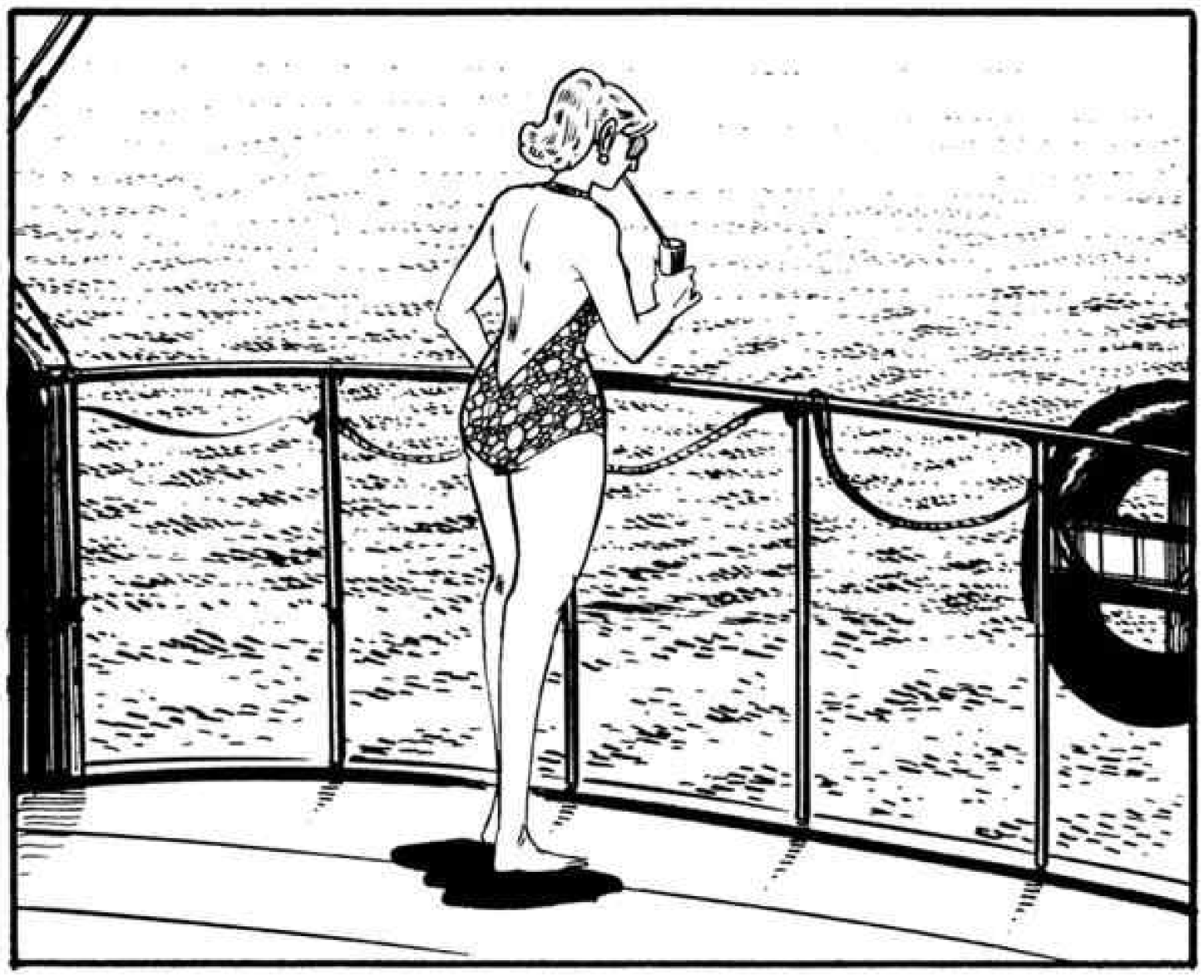
BUT I THINK I'M CORRECT THAT YOU'RE THE ONLY MAN IN THE WORLD I COULD TRUST WITH THESE FEARS...AND MY ONE SMALL HOPE.

...I DON'T MIND...IF YOU TAKE ALL THIS AS JEALOUSY... AND ME AS A FOOL.

.....

.....

.....



PART 3

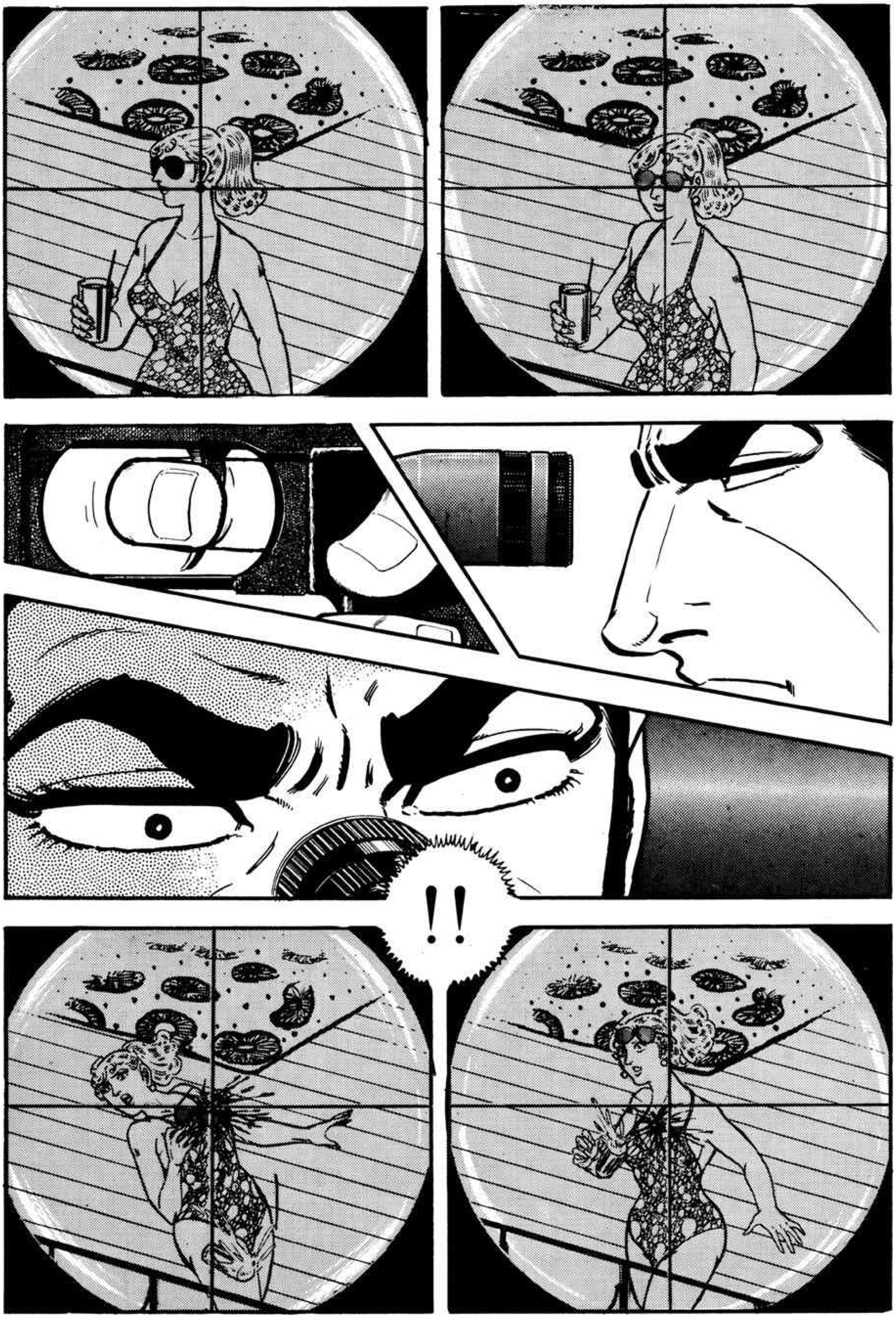
THE ECHOING GUNSHOT

fsshhh

SIX METERS PER SECOND. WIND FROM 2 O'CLOCK.

chik

CHAK

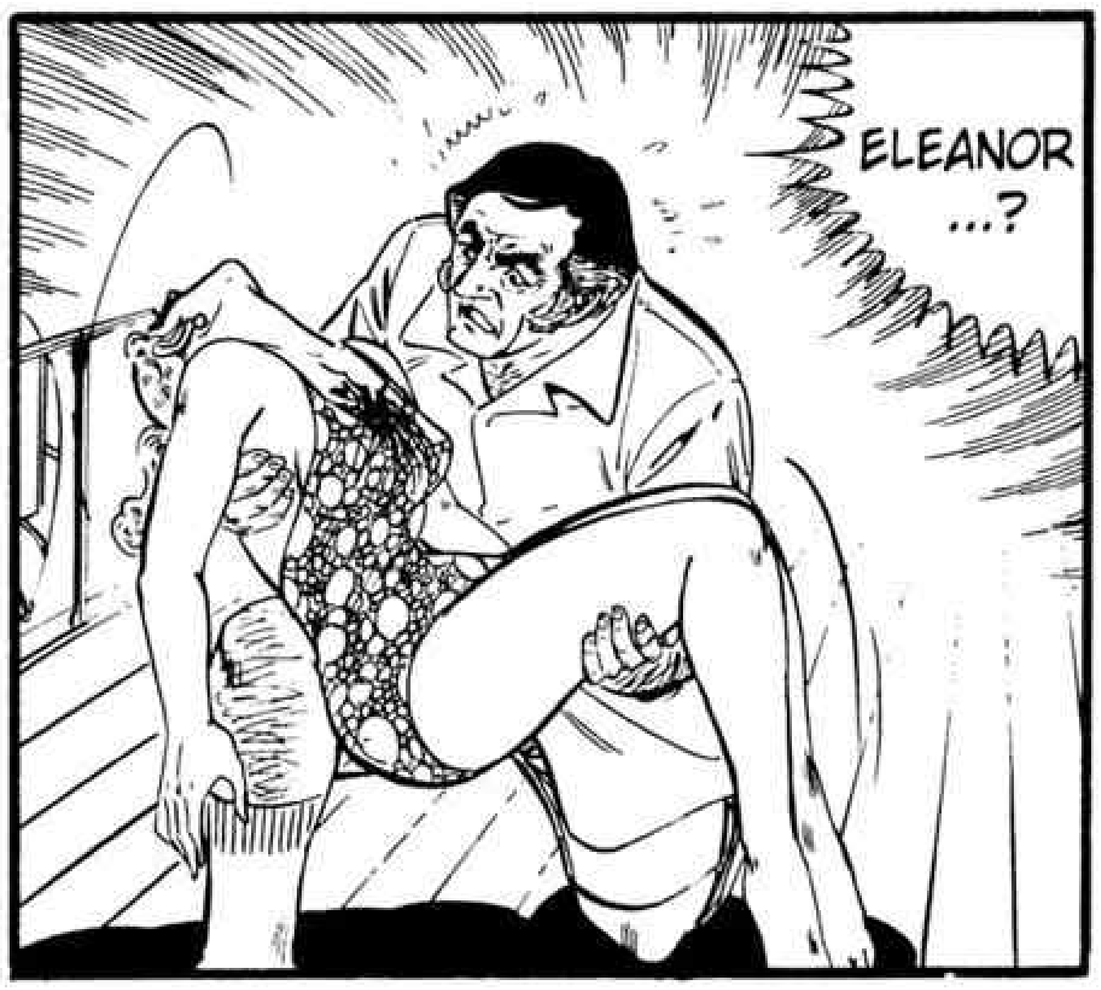


BLAMMMMMM

blammmmmmm

WH...
WHAT...

ELEANOR!


ELEANOR ...?

ELEANOR!

# PART 4 TOO FAST FOR A POLICE CORDON

.....
.....
VRRRRMMMMMMMMM

WHAT HAPPENED, OFFICER?
OVER THERE, MA'AM.

...described as a foreign national, oriental, age around 30, approximately six feet, short hair...

...murder suspect is to be considered armed and dangerous. Suspect's name is Duke Togo...

!!

GOT IT!

...Officer, please acknowledge.

THEY SURE DO...AND I THINK WE'VE GOT HIM.

THEY GOT A DESCRIPTION YET, DAVEY?

PLEASE...MY ENGLISH? I DON'T UNDER-STAND...

LICENSE, SIR? ARE YOU VISITING?

K-K

TH

WAP

YOU UNDERSTAND THIS, I BET. NOW YOU'RE GOING TO STEP OUT OF THE CAR, AND YOU'RE GOING TO RAISE YOUR HANDS OVER YOUR HEAD.

WHEEE

SKKRRE

EEEEEEEEEE

BL-AMBLAMMMMM

SHIT!

BLAMMMMMMMMM

CHINK

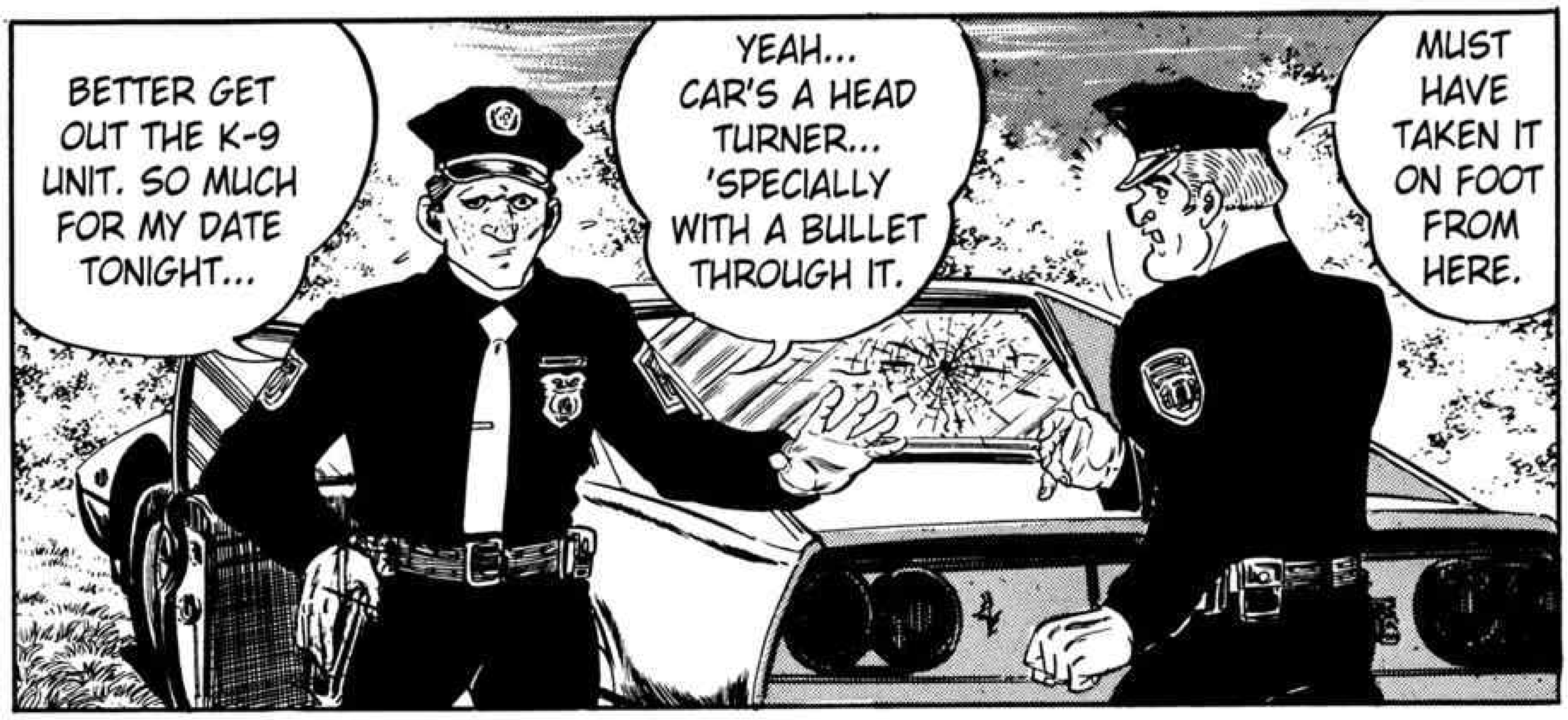
RRRRMMMMMMMMM

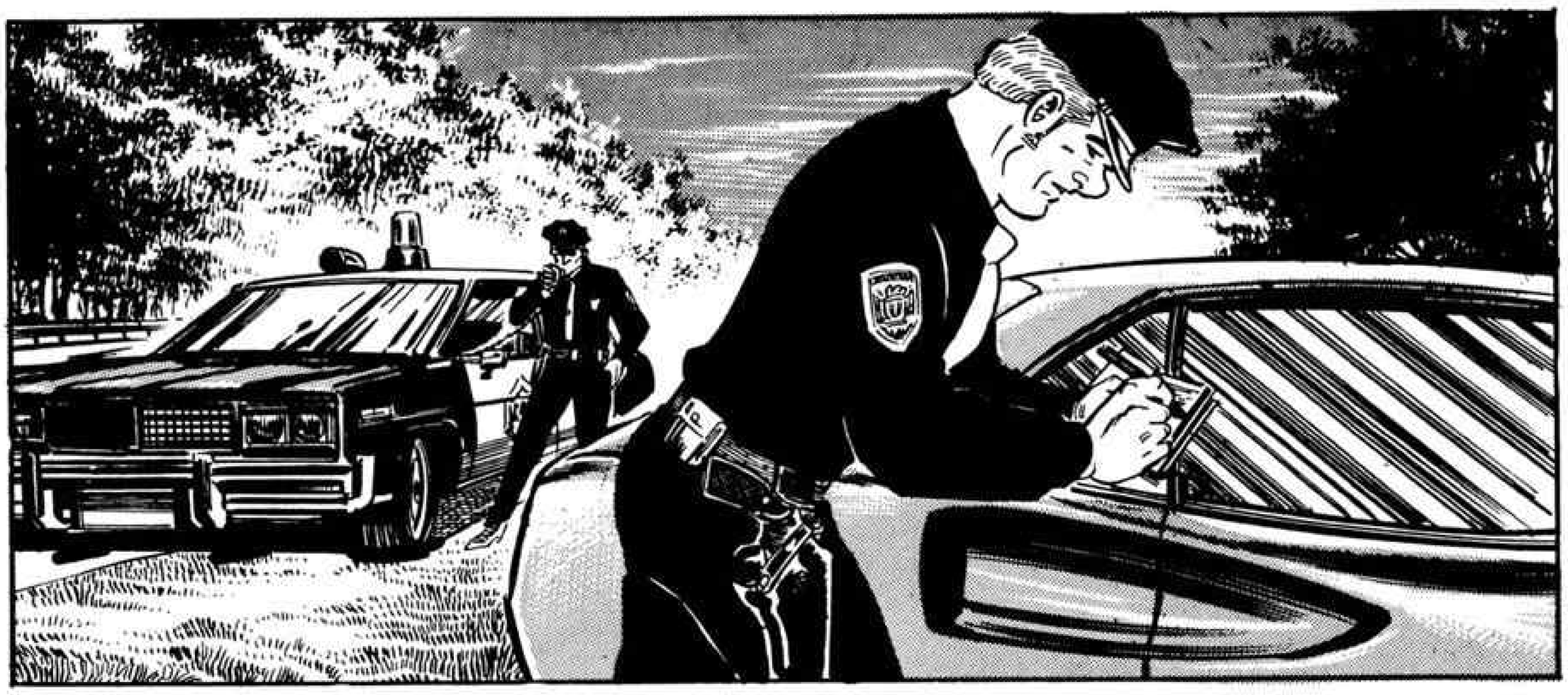
VEEE

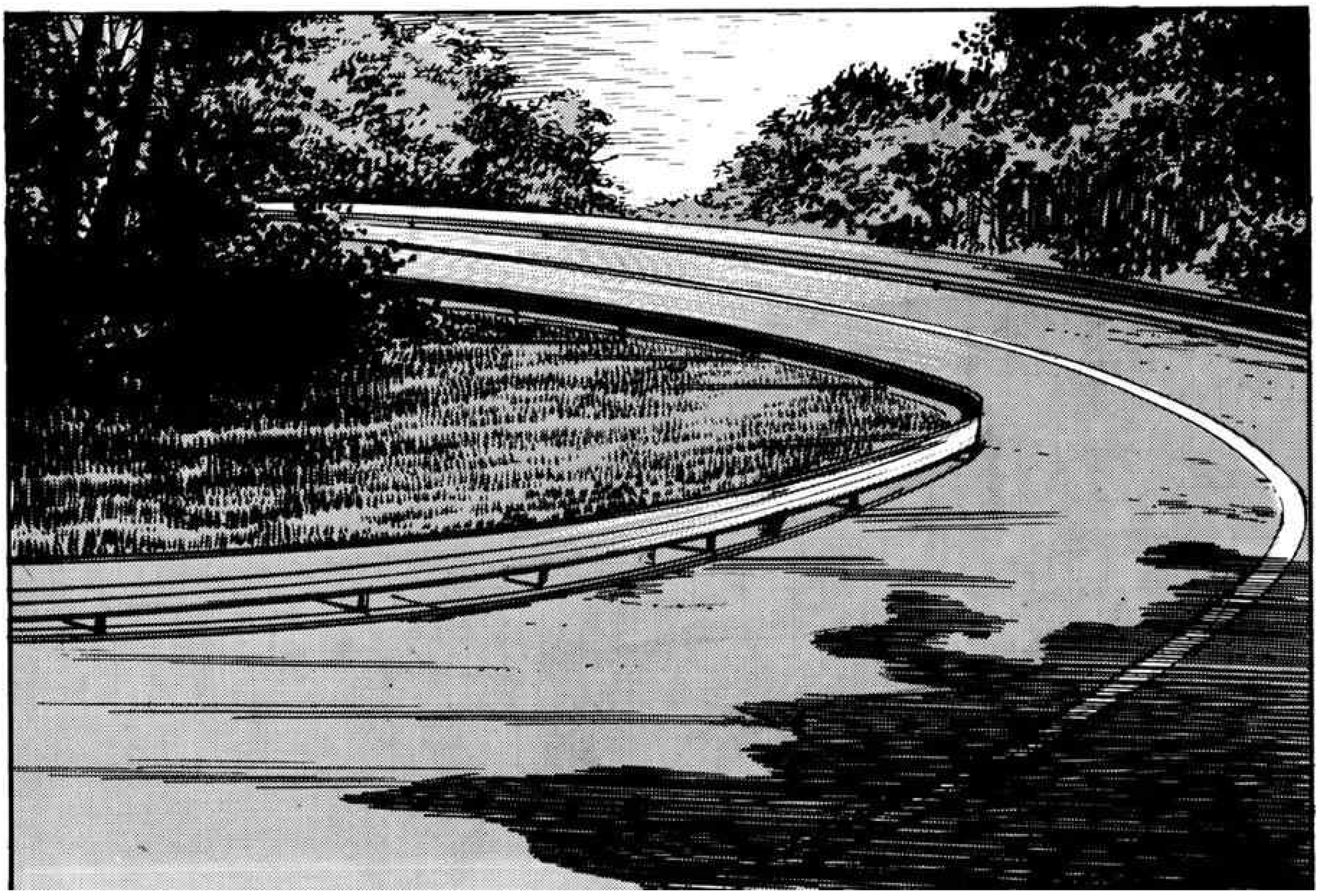
# PART 5 ENTRY OF THE MURDER SUSPECT

THIS IS THE VEHICLE, ALL RIGHT.

SEE THAT?

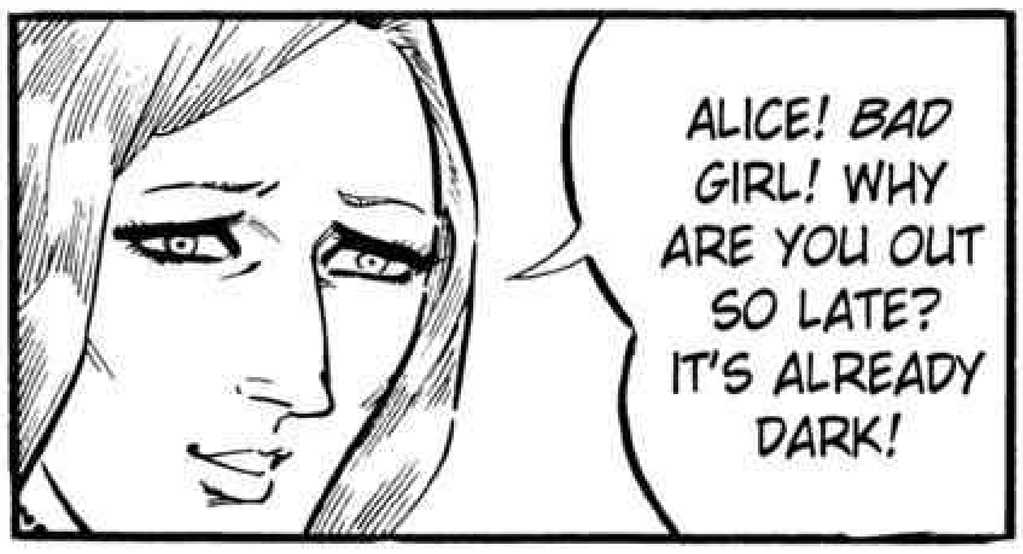

BETTER GET OUT THE K-9 UNIT. SO MUCH FOR MY DATE TONIGHT...
YEAH... CAR'S A HEAD TURNER... 'SPECIALLY WITH A BULLET THROUGH IT.
MUST HAVE TAKEN IT ON FOOT FROM HERE.

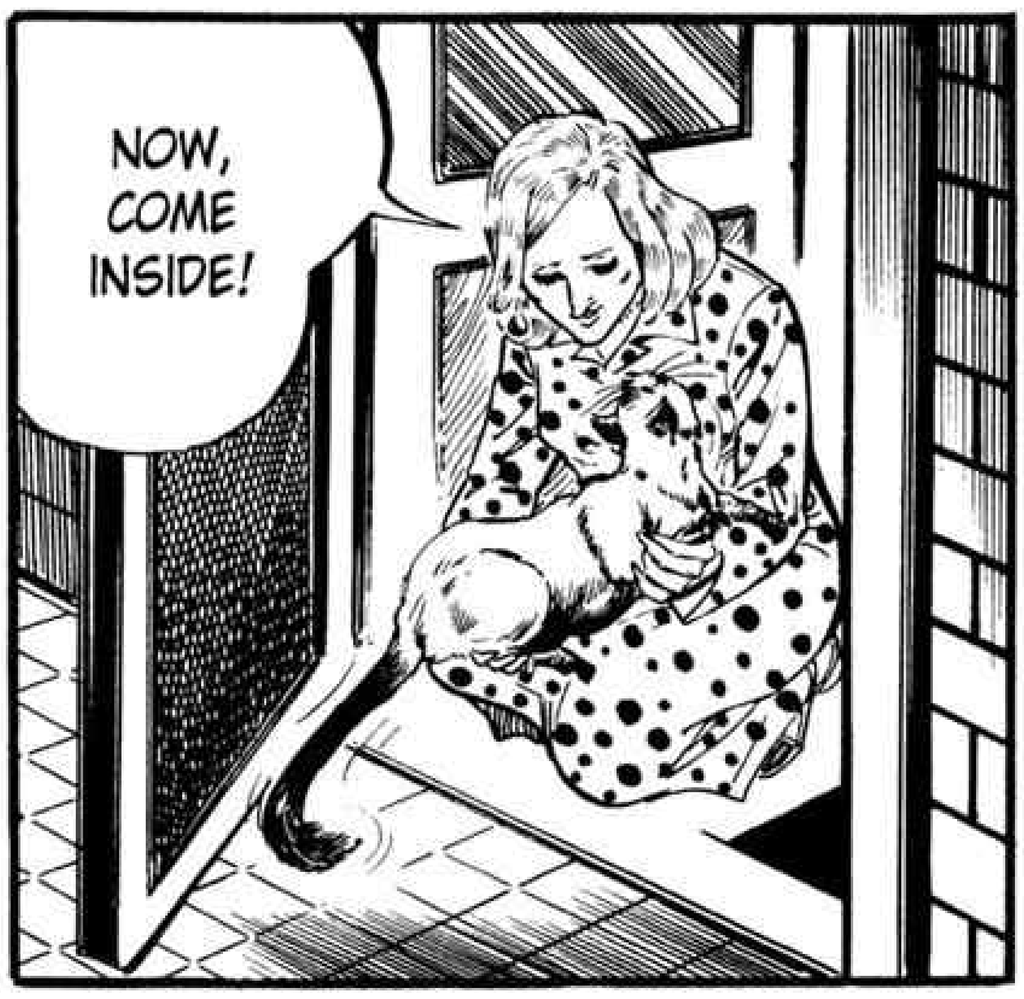


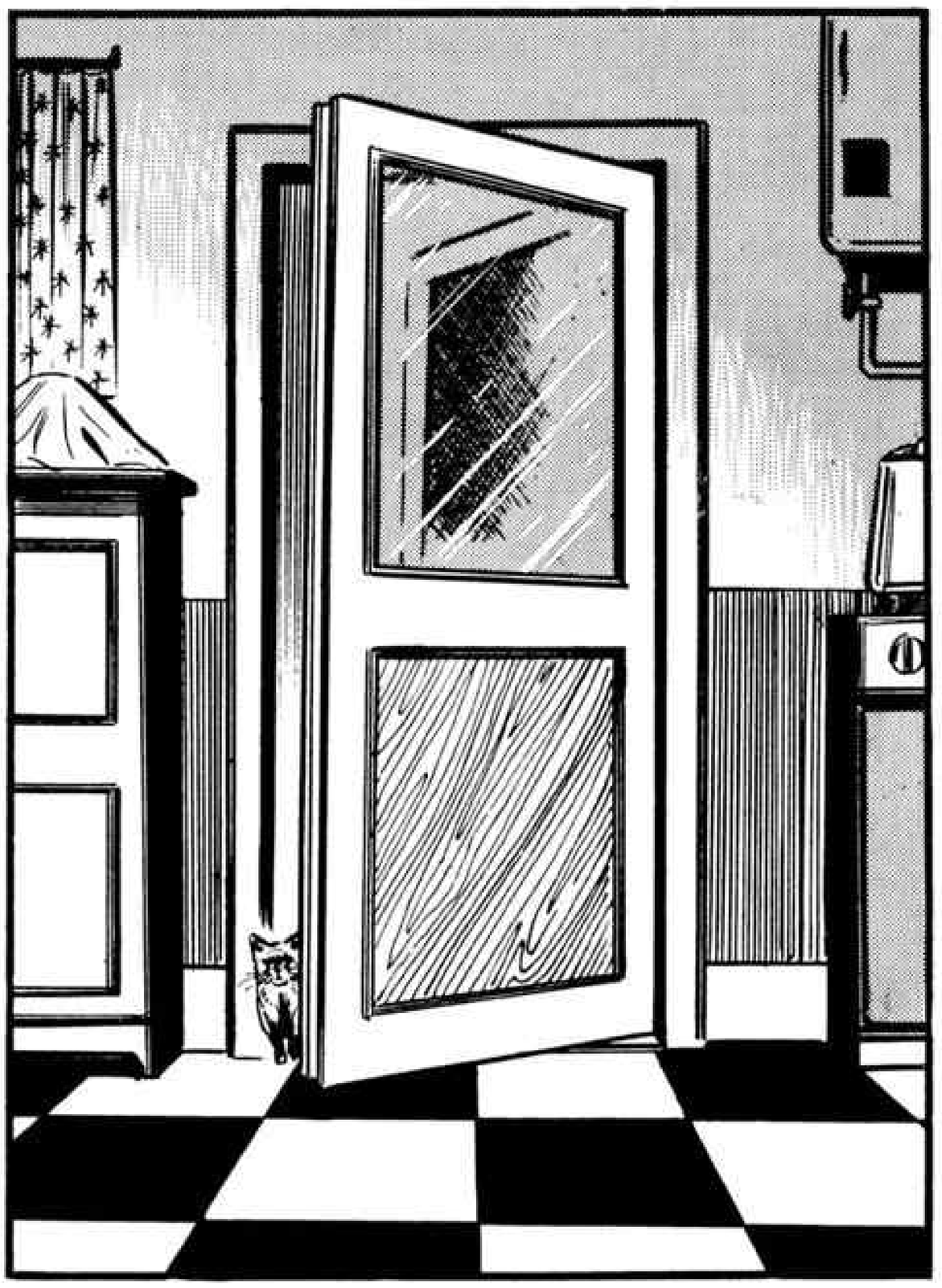


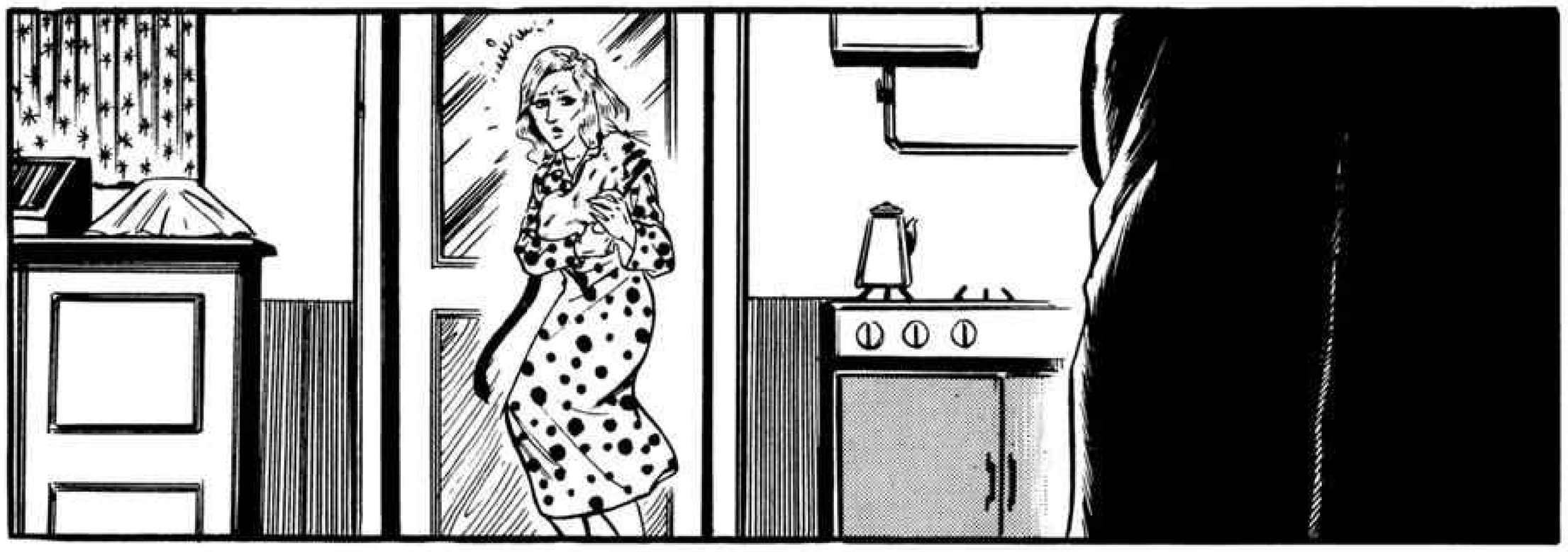
?

ALICE?


ALICE! BAD GIRL! WHY ARE YOU OUT SO LATE? IT'S ALREADY DARK!


NOW, COME INSIDE!





DON'T MAKE ANY LOUD NOISES.

WH- WHO ARE YOU?!

.....

I-I DON'T WANT YOUR MONEY!

UNITED

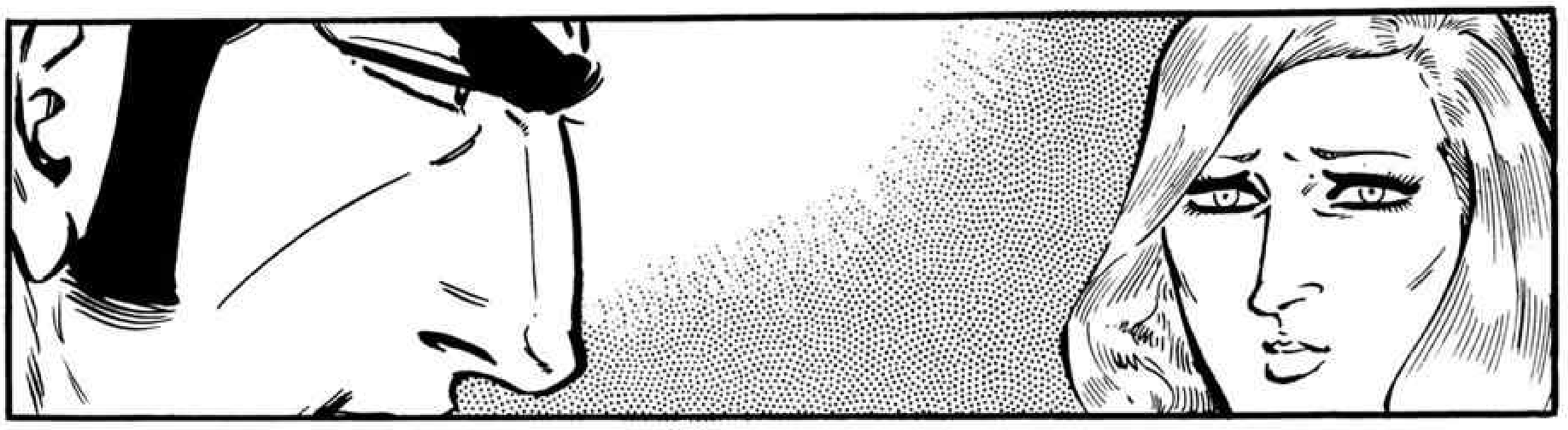
THIS IS A THOUSAND DOLLARS.

IF YOU'LL BE QUIET AND COOPERATE, I WON'T HARM YOU... I NEED TO USE YOUR PHONE... AND I NEED A MEAL.

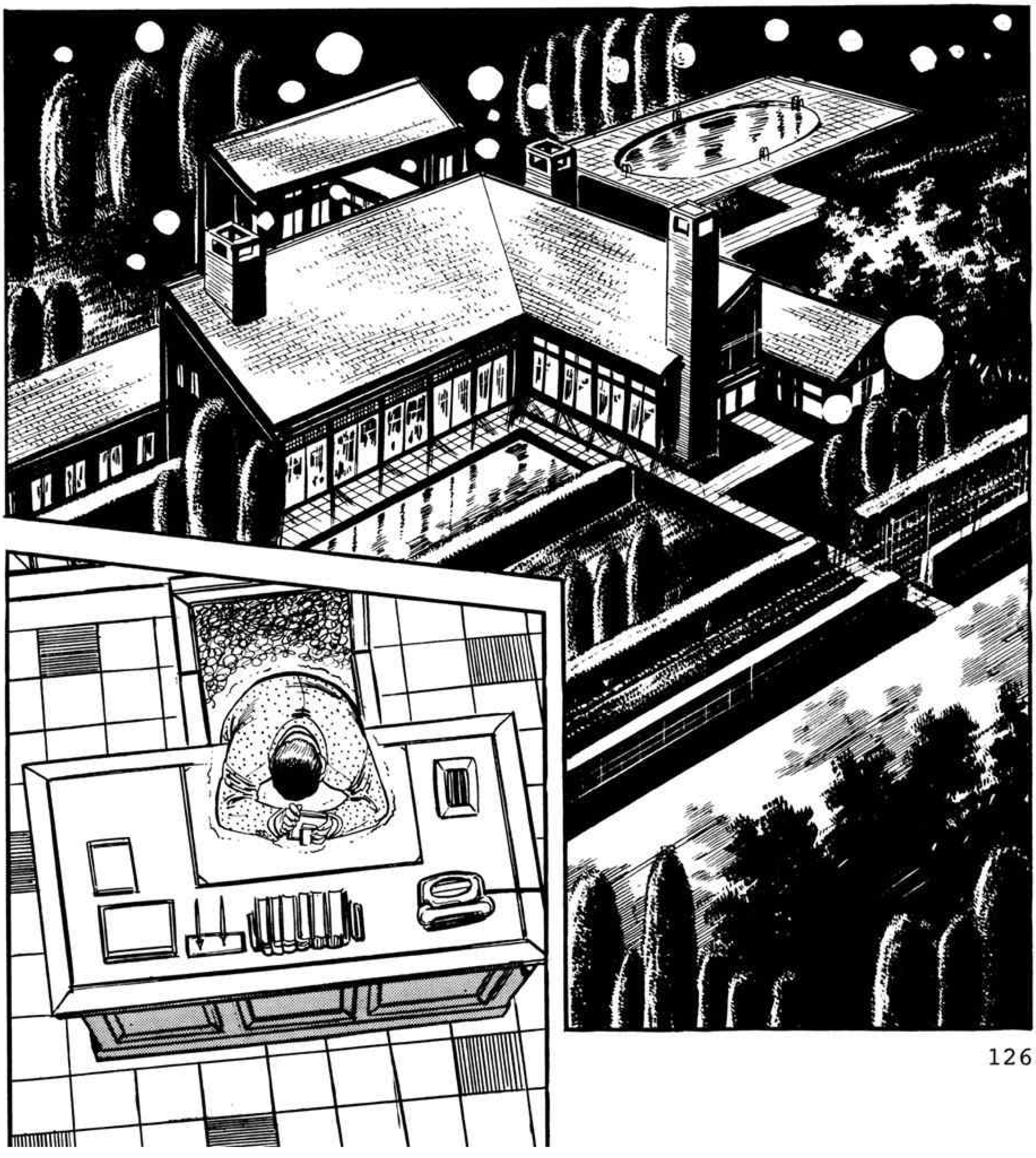
...THAT I DON'T MEAN TO INTRUDE.

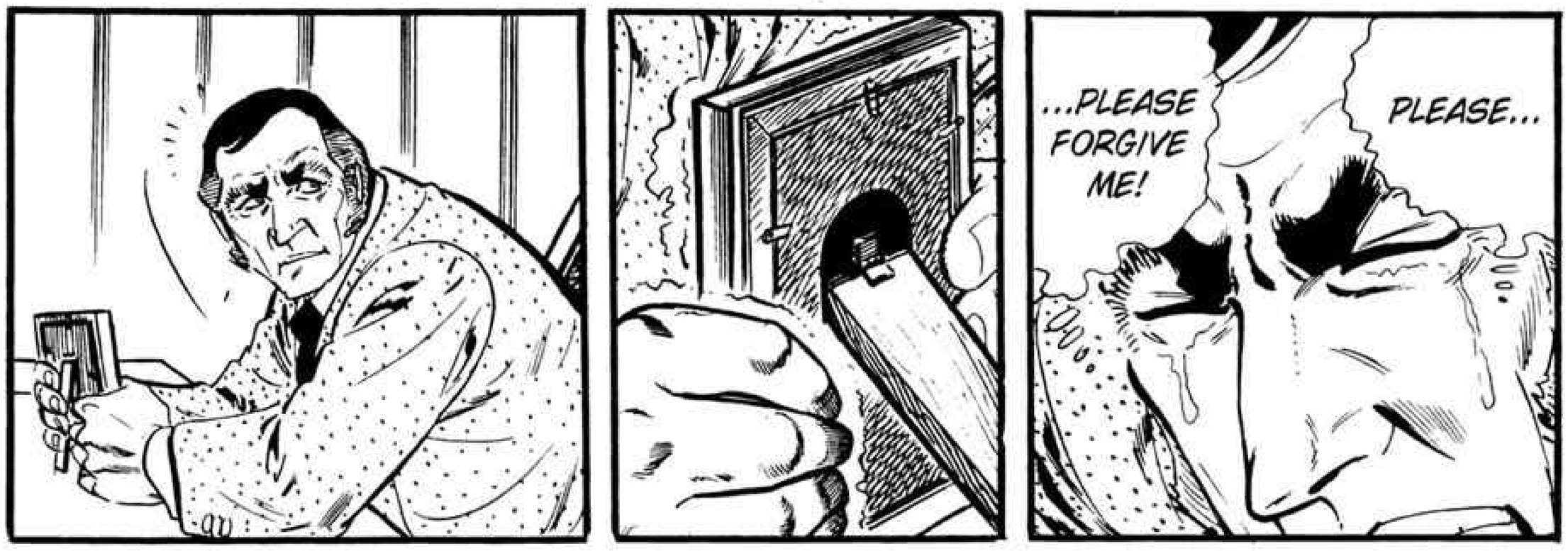
IT'S JUST MY WAY OF SAYING ...

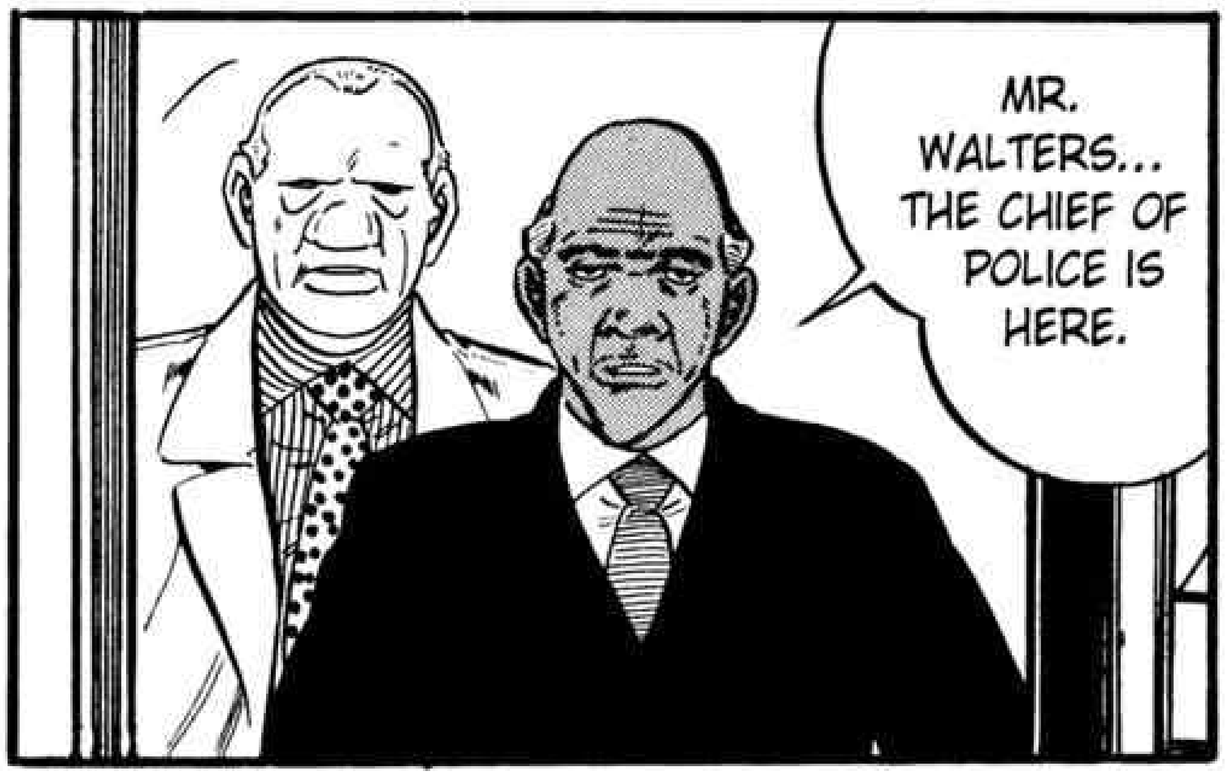
.....



# PART 6 THE CHIEF OF POLICE

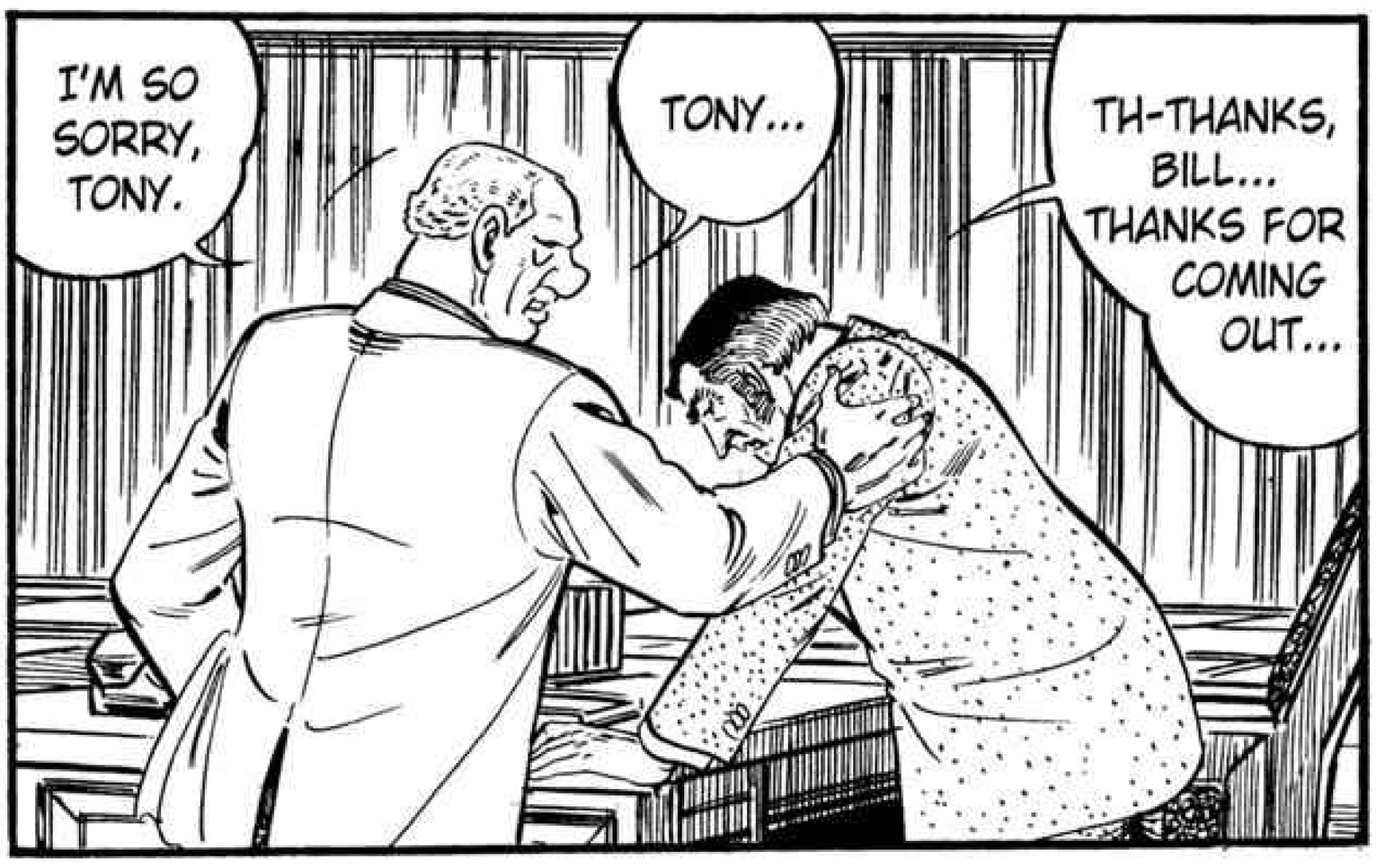



...PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
PLEASE...


MR. WALTERS... THE CHIEF OF POLICE IS HERE.

BILL!

I'M HERE FOR YOU.
YOU WANTED TO TALK IN PERSON.


I'M SO SORRY, TONY.
TONY...
TH-THANKS, BILL... THANKS FOR COMING OUT...

...I WANT YOU TO HEAR IT FROM ME.

BUT YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW I KNOW ALL THIS...

.....

.....

...THE MAN YOU'RE AFTER...

I KNOW WHO MURDERED MY WIFE. HE'S A PROFESSIONAL KILLER. YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF HIM...

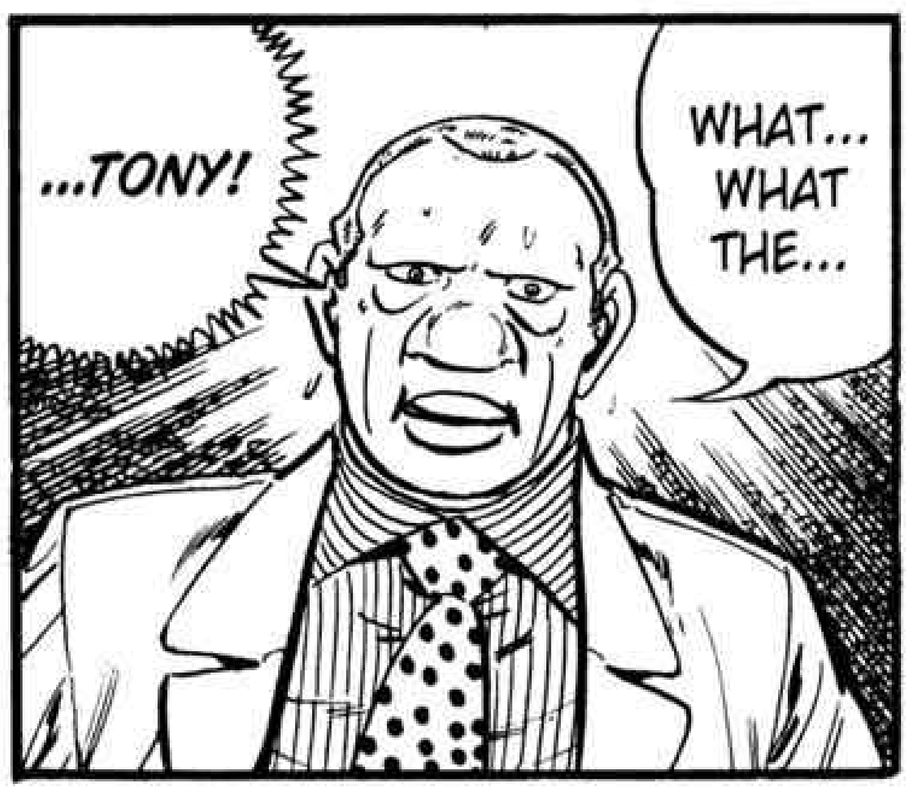
...DUKE TOGO. GOLGO 13!

RRREF!

RRRREF!

RREF!

# PART 7 WALTERS CONFESSES



TONY, THIS IS INSANE! DIDN'T YOU THINK THAT EVEN AN *INCH* OFF WOULD COST HER LIFE?!

MAD-NESS!

.....

ELEANOR, A RADICAL? AND YOU THOUGHT SOMEONE IN THE POLICE WOULD KILL HER?

.....

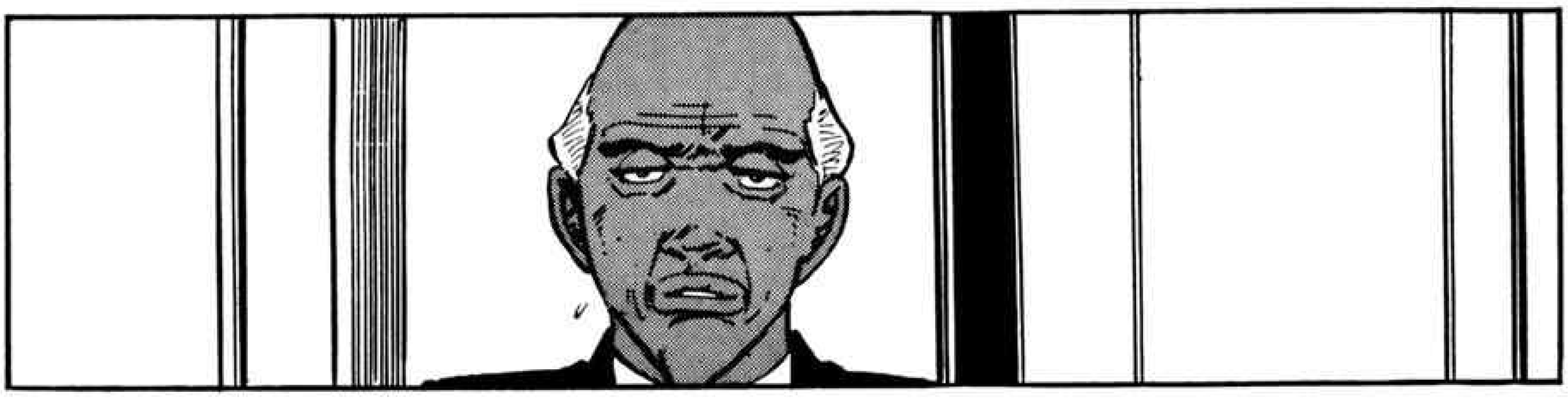
ON A YACHT? ROCKING IN THE WAVES...?

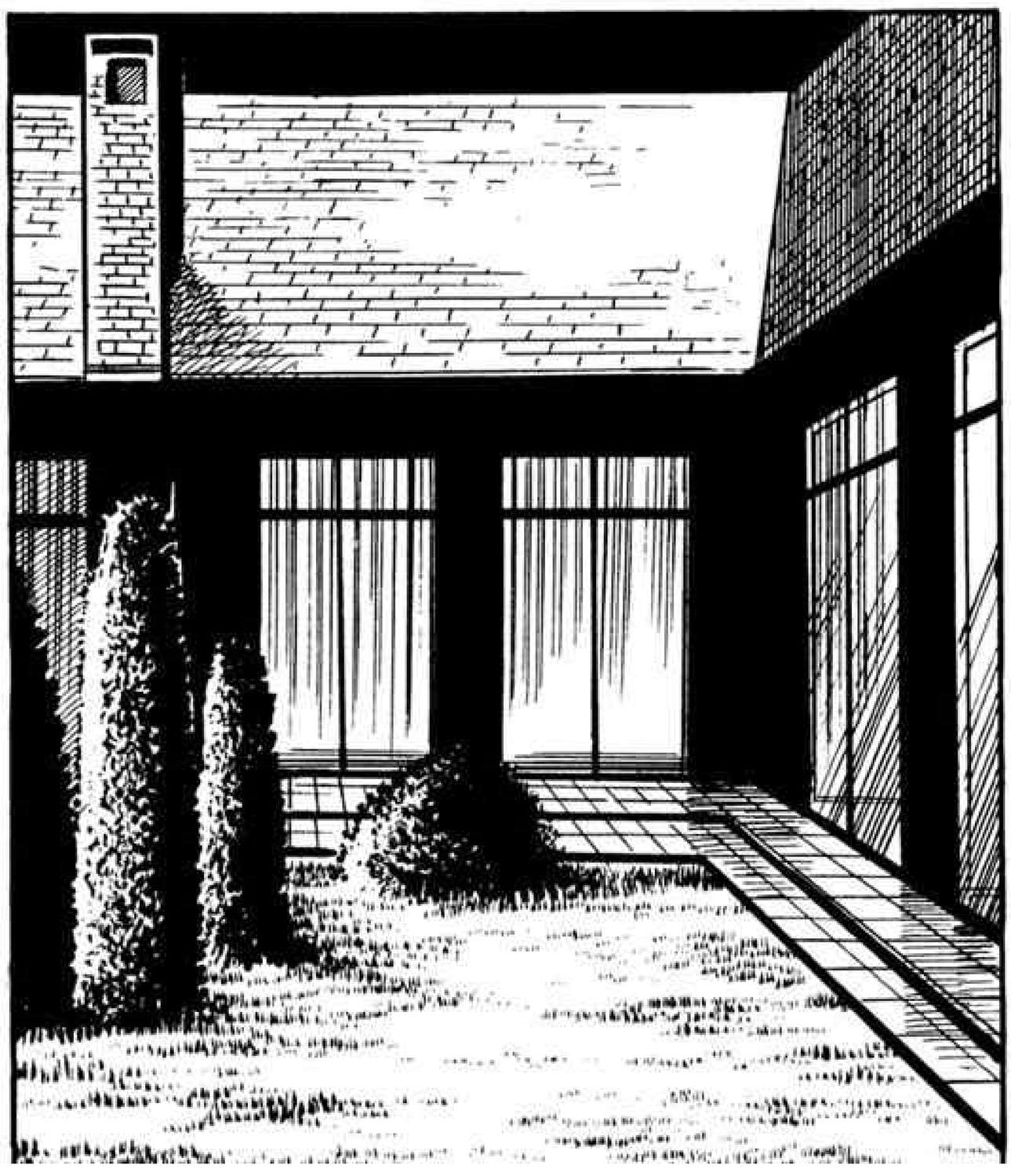
SO WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE FOR ME, BILL... ACCESSORY TO MURDER...?

AND ELEANOR'S GONE, TONY!

YOU WEREN'T THE ONE WHO FIRED AND MISSED...BUT YOU'RE RE-SPONSIBLE!

……



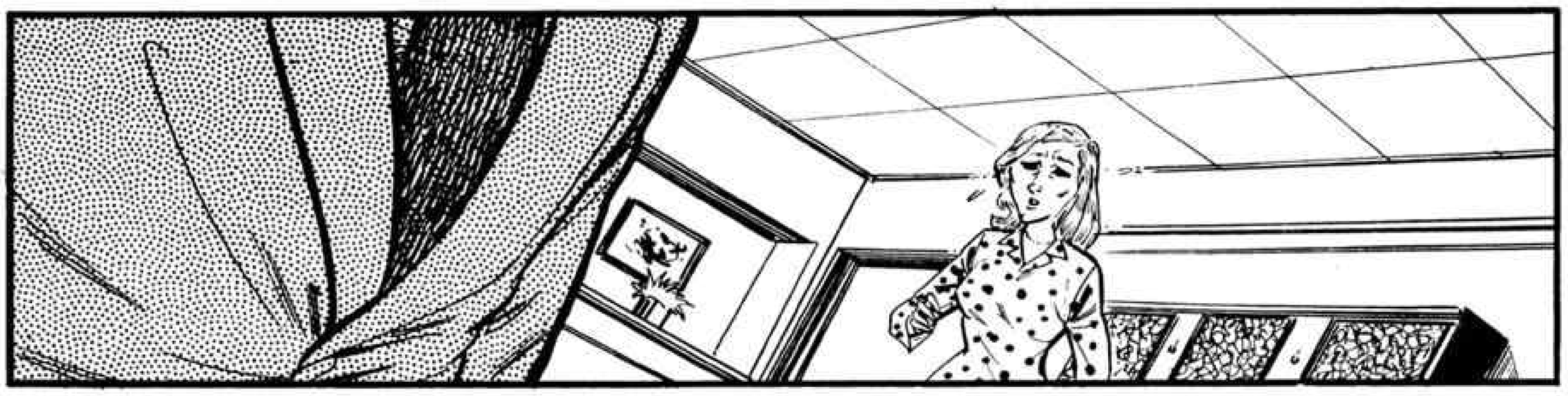


ROWR

RRRF!

RRRRRRF

RRRF!



RRRFF
RRRFF
RRRFF
RRRFF
RRRFF

WE THINK THE SUSPECT'S IN TOWN. HAVE YOU NOTICED ANYTHING?

THERE'S BEEN A MURDER UP THE COAST...

MIKE, WHAT'S GOING ON?

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, JANE.

NO... NOTHING UNUSUAL...

RRRR

!!

?!

RRRRFFF!

RRRFFF!

RRRRRR

WAIT, MIKE! IT'S JUST MY...

RRFF!
RRFF
RRFF!
RRFF!
HE ALMOST ATE ALICE.
.....
DO ME A FAVOR AND STAY INSIDE TONIGHT TOO, HUH, JANE?
YOU OUGHT TO KEEP HER LOCKED UP.
MENACE TO THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD, SHE IS.

NO PROBLEM, STU.

LOCK THE DOORS AND WINDOWS, AND GIVE US A CALL IF YOU HEAR ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS.

SORRY WE SCARED YOU, BUT WE DON'T GET TOO MANY NIGHTS LIKE THIS.

I DON'T KNOW!

...I DON'T KNOW...

.....

...DIDN'T YOU TELL THEM...?

WHY...

I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU, MISTER.

I DON'T CARE MUCH ABOUT LIFE ANYMORE THESE DAYS.

...YOU KNOW, YOU CAME IN JUST LIKE YOU PLEASED... JUST LIKE MY HUSBAND USED TO.

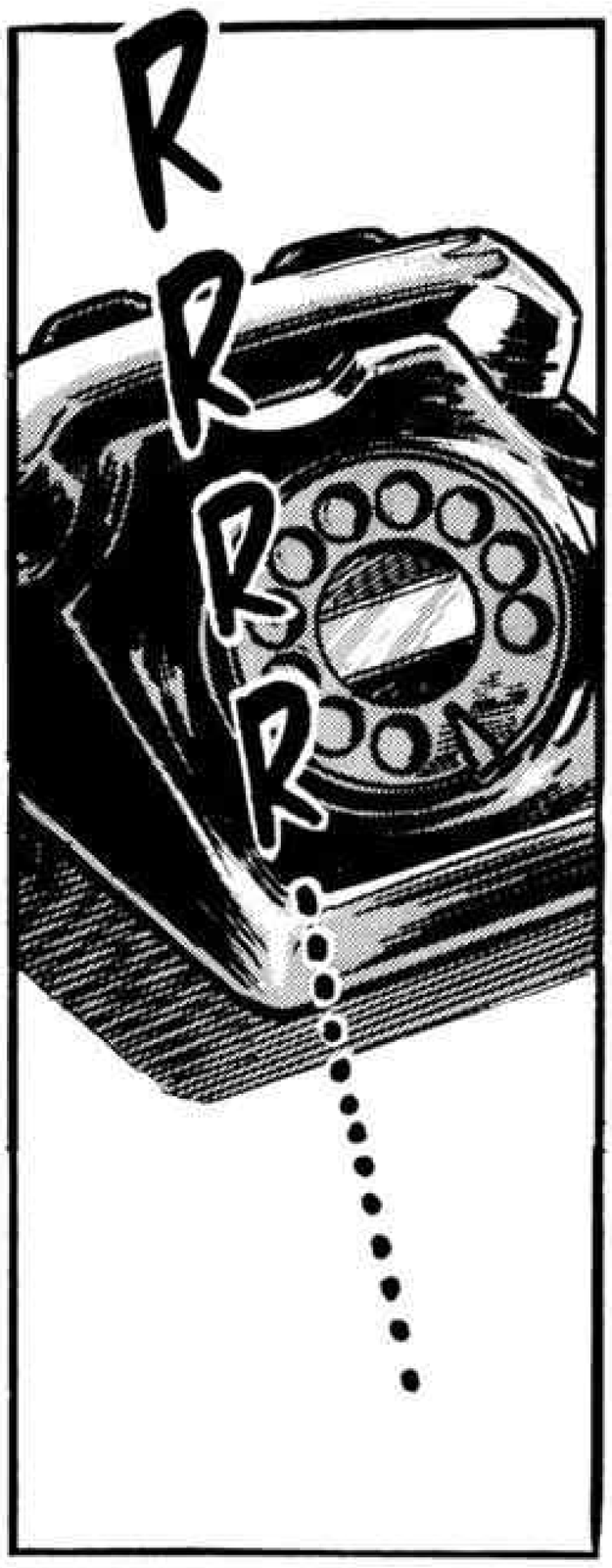
.....

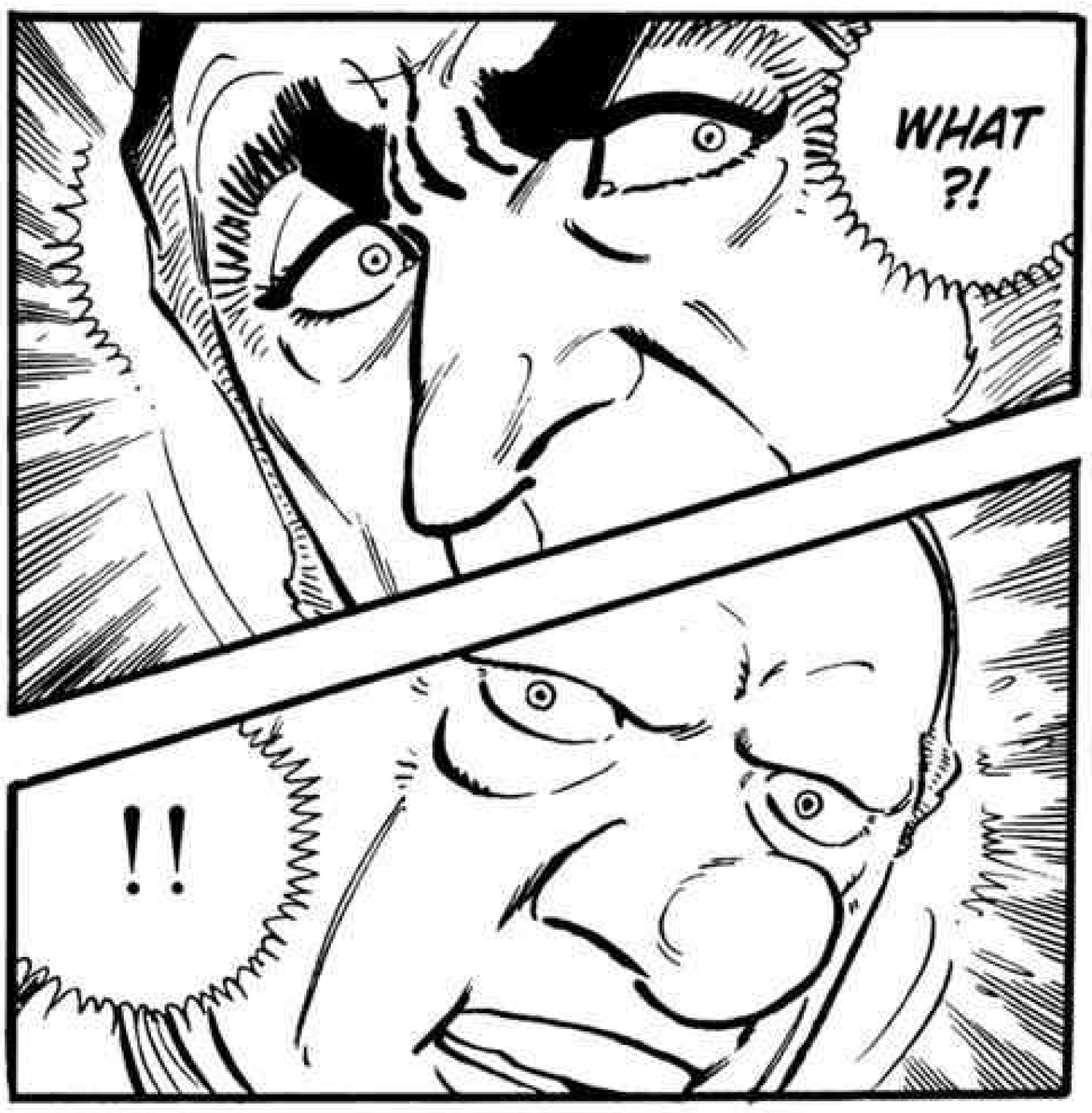
Oooo.

...YOU'LL LEAVE WHEN YOU PLEASE, TOO.

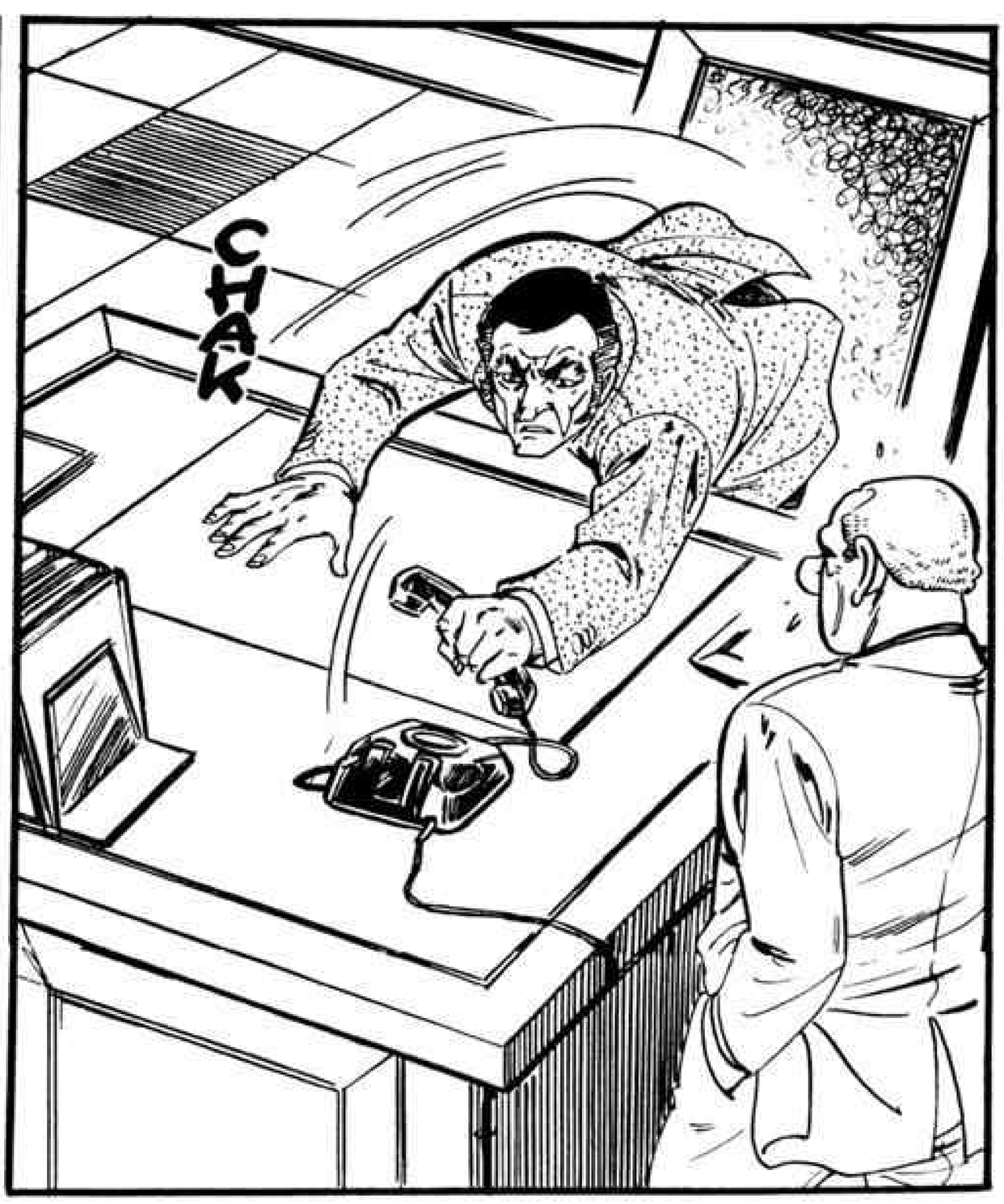
AND I GUESS ...

# PART 8 CALL FROM A FUGITIVE





YOU KILLED HER, YOU CLUMSY BASTARD!
BEST MARKSMAN IN THE WORLD!
TOGO!! YOU KILLED HER!


CHAK

DON'T LIE TO ME, YOU...
DIDN'T FIRE IT? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!

...I DIDN'T FIRE THE SHOT.
THERE'S ONE THING I WANT TO TELL YOU...

WHETHER YOU BELIEVE ME IS IRRELEVANT, MR. WALTERS.
THIS HAS INTERSECTED WITH MY BUSINESS...SO I INTEND TO FIND OUT WHO DID IT.
I DIDN'T KILL YOUR WIFE. ELEANOR FELL BEFORE I HAD A CHANCE TO SET MY CROSSHAIRS.

KEEP HIM TALKING! I'LL GET A TRACE FROM THE PHONE DOWN-STAIRS!

.....

THEIR RESPONSE TIME WAS QUITE IMPRESSIVE.

...THEN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO THE LOCAL POLICE FROM THERE.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE TRYING T-TO MAKE *EXCUSES...*

I WANT TO ASK YOU ONE THING... YOU REPORTED THE INCIDENT USING YOUR SHIP-TO-SHORE PHONE, BUT WHERE DOES IT CONNECT TO?

*CONNECT?!* IT CONNECTS TO THE SHORELINE SAFETY DEPARTMENT IN CAYUCOS. SO WHAT?!

...EXCUSES ABOUT ***KILLING MY WIFE!!***

.....

HELLO?
HELLO?

klik

?!

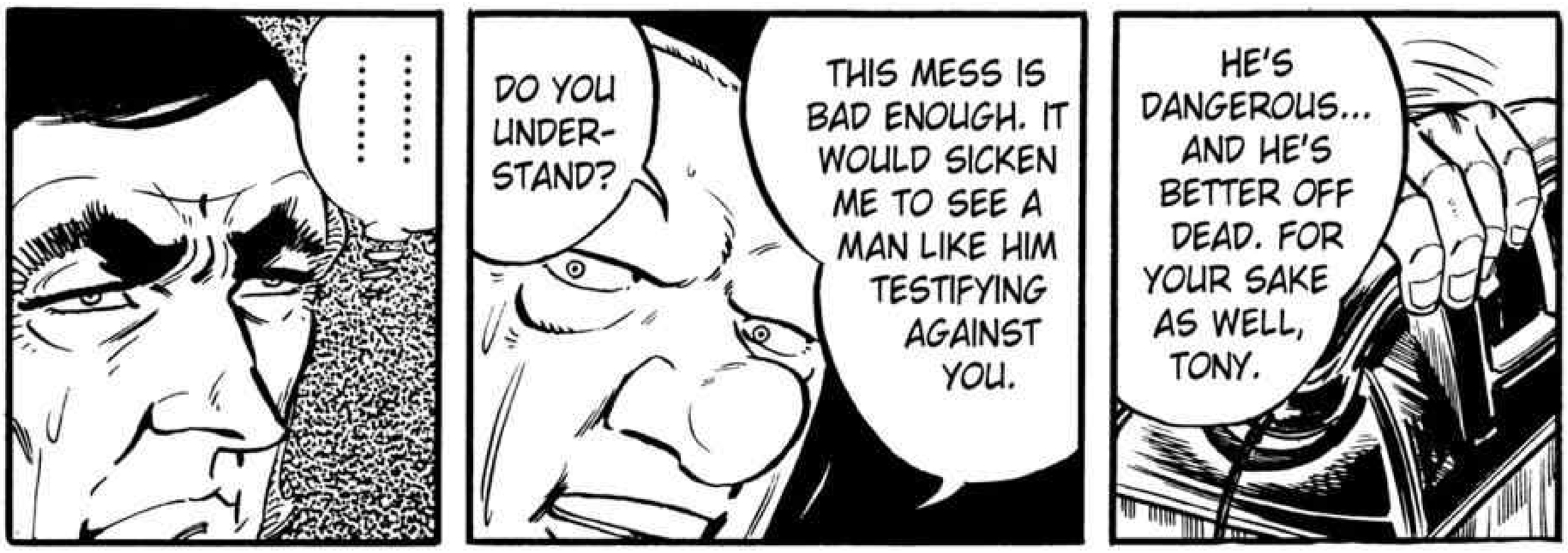
...HE ISN'T THE TYPE TO BE CAUGHT SO EASILY...

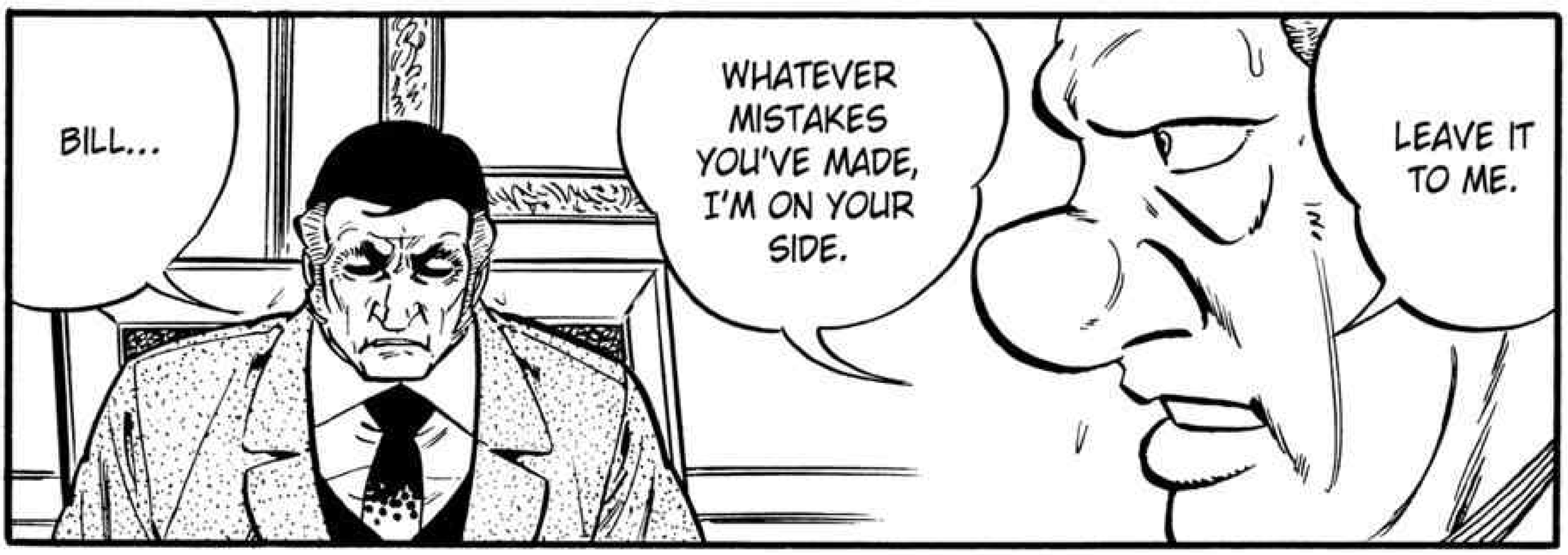
NO GOOD ...

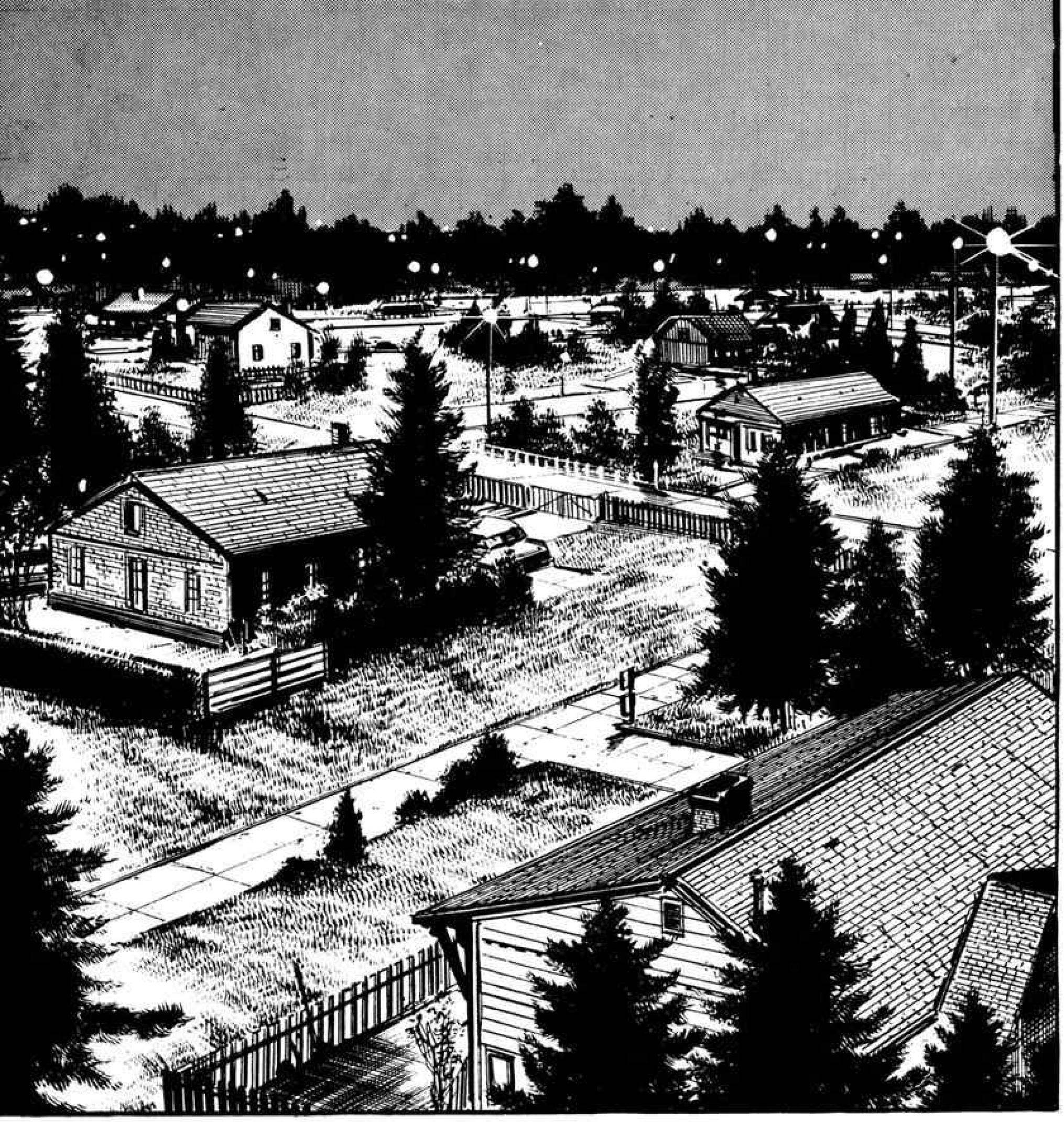
!!

I DON'T WANT ANY OF MY MEN GETTING KILLED TO PROTECT A KNOWN MURDERER...MAKE THAT CLEARLY UNDER-STOOD!

...THIS IS CHIEF TARRANT! PASS DOWN THE WORD...DON'T HESITATE TO TAKE THE SUSPECT OUT IF HE PRESENTS ANY RISK!


.....
DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
THIS MESS IS BAD ENOUGH. IT WOULD SICKEN ME TO SEE A MAN LIKE HIM TESTIFYING AGAINST YOU.
HE'S DANGEROUS... AND HE'S BETTER OFF DEAD. FOR YOUR SAKE AS WELL, TONY.

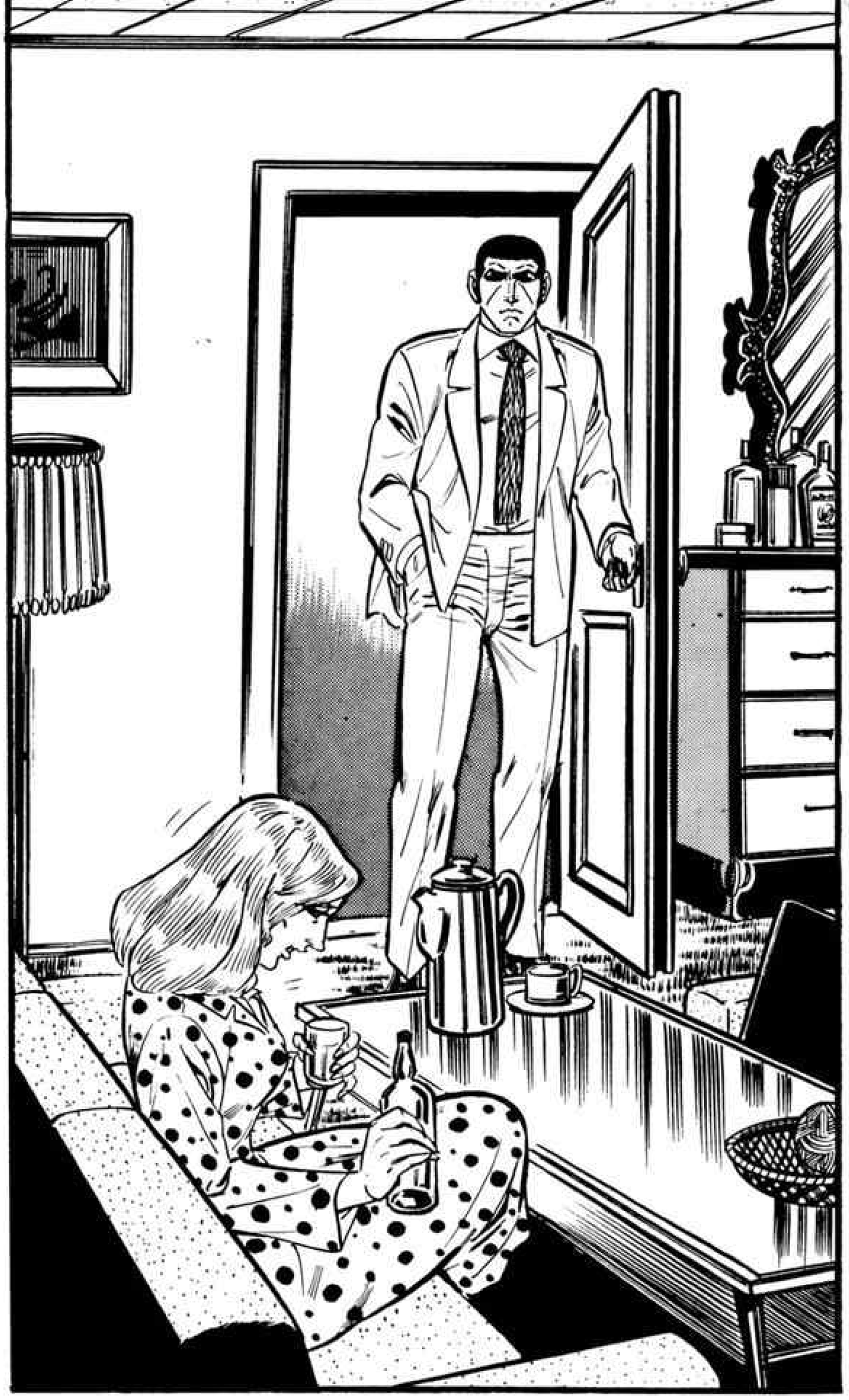

BILL...
WHATEVER MISTAKES YOU'VE MADE, I'M ON YOUR SIDE.
LEAVE IT TO ME.



PART 9

"DON'T GO..."

SNIFF
SNIFF



...TH-THE DOGS'LL JUST SNIFF YOU OUT ...
DON'T GO...

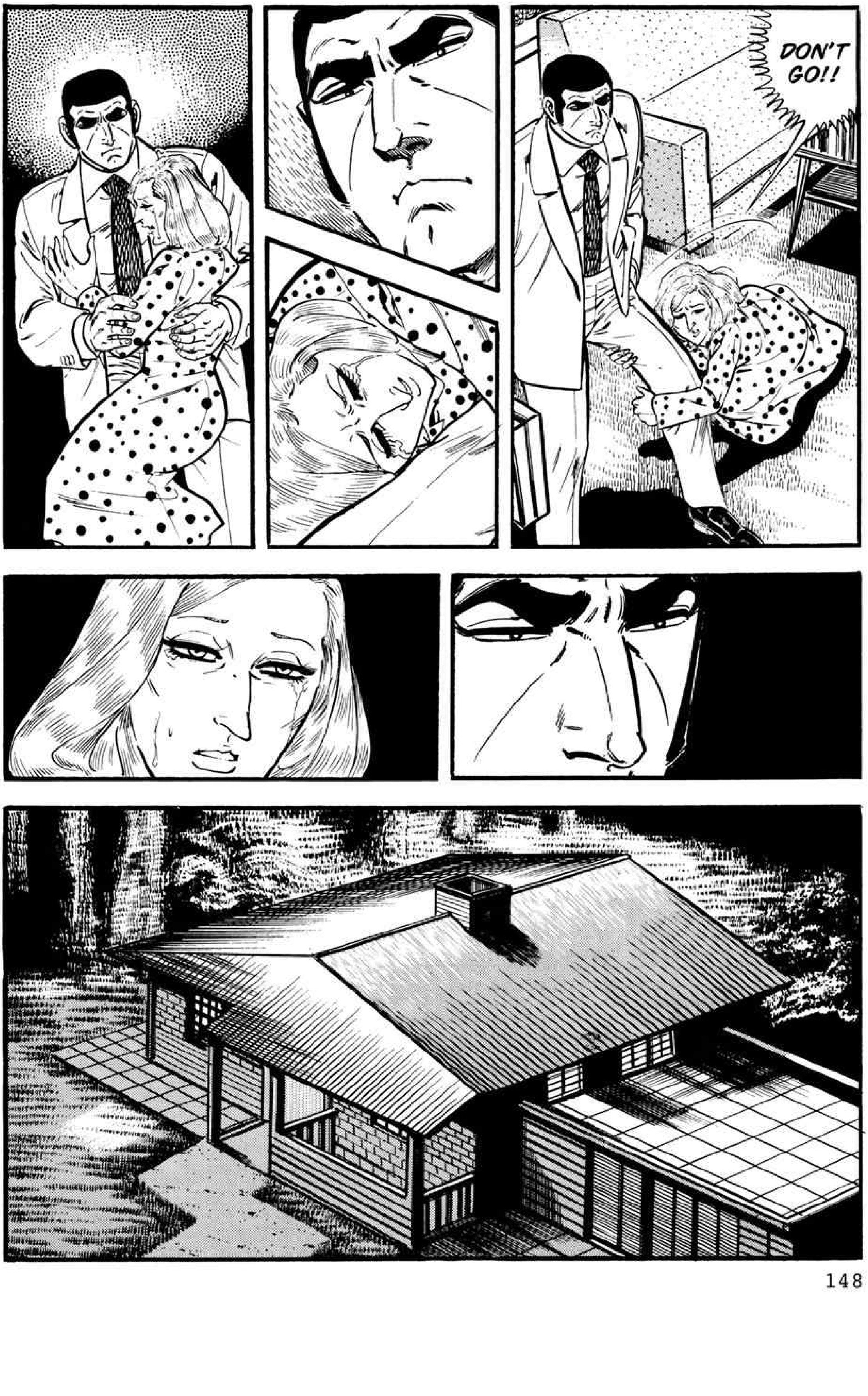
SHHHHFFFF

?

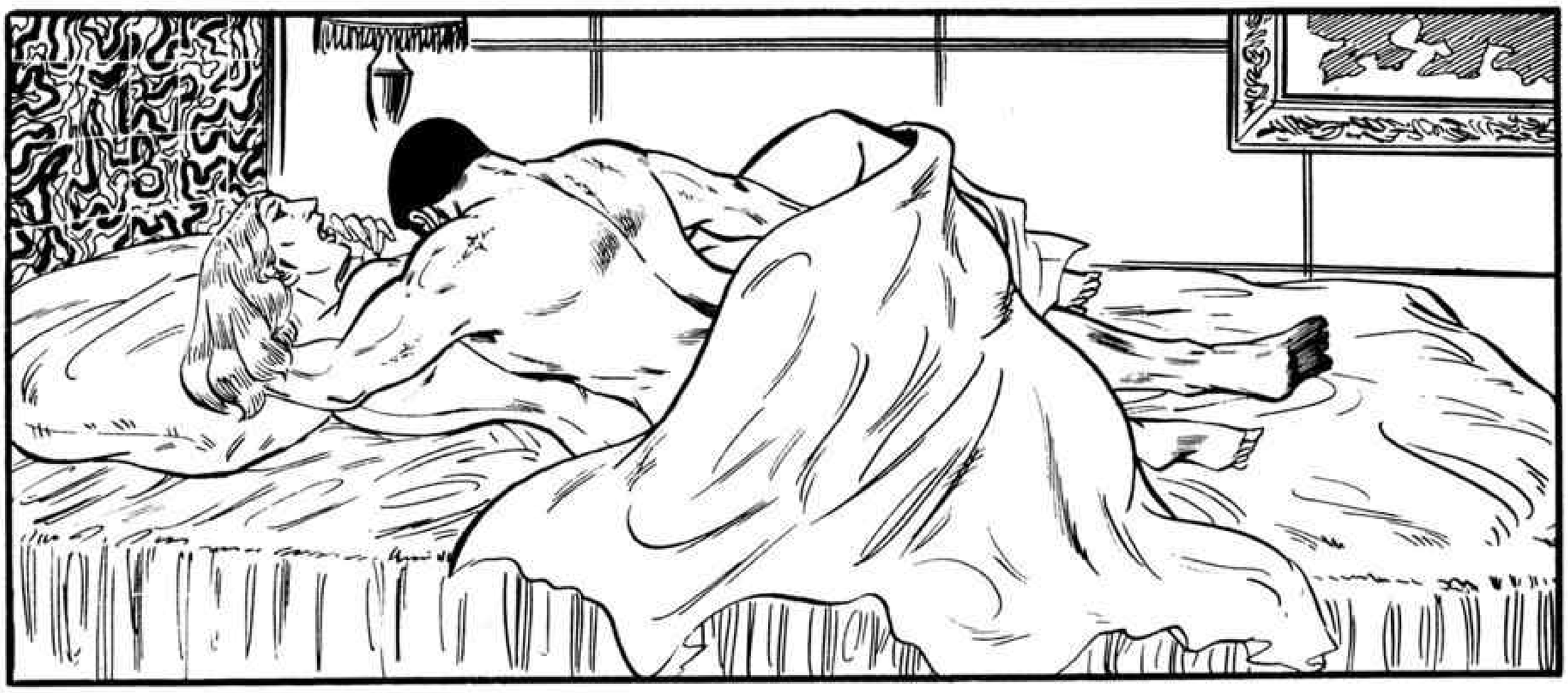
MY PERFUME. THINK THAT'LL WORK?

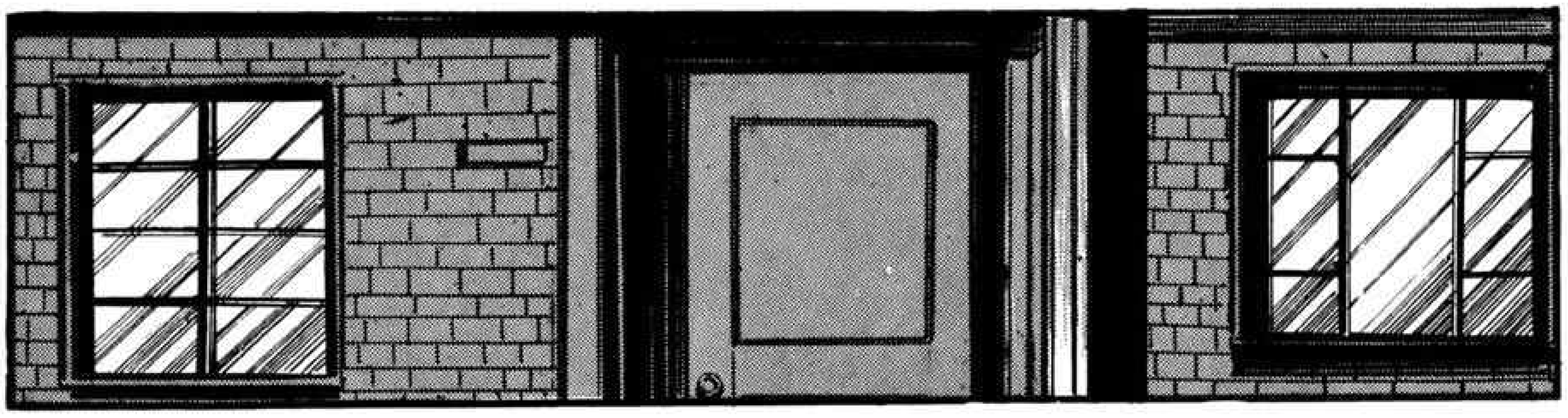
.....

IF YOU WANT ...


DON'T GO!!

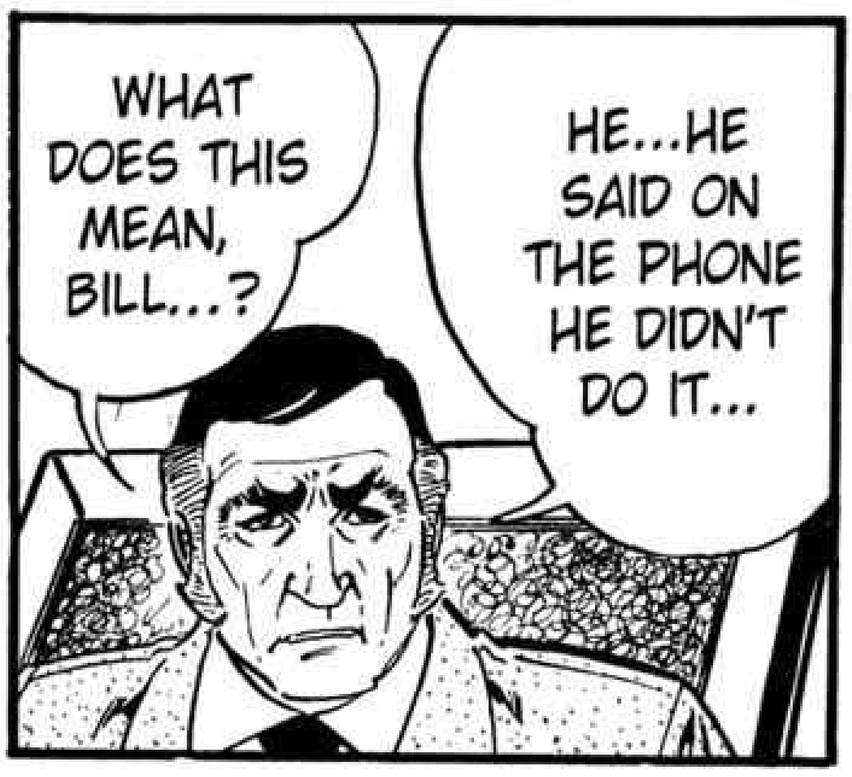
aaahh
aaahh

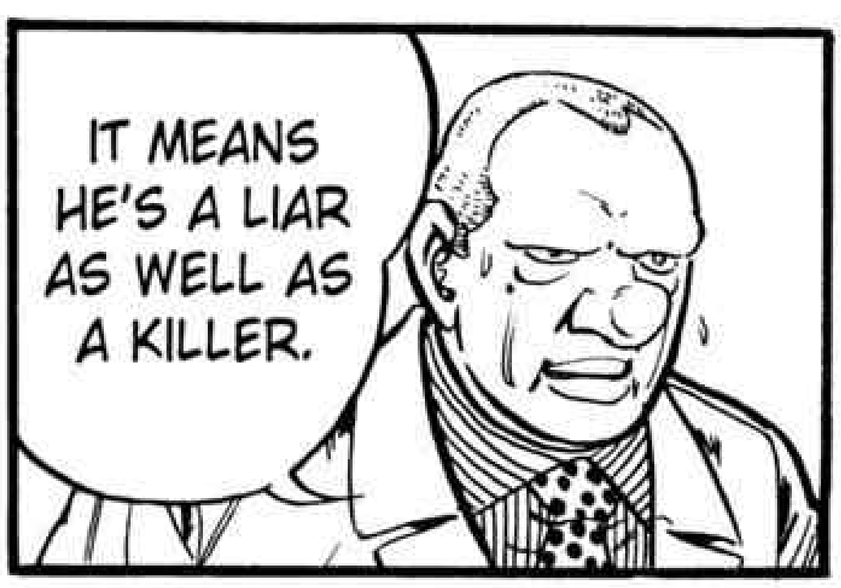




PART 10

LEAVE WHEN YOU PLEASE





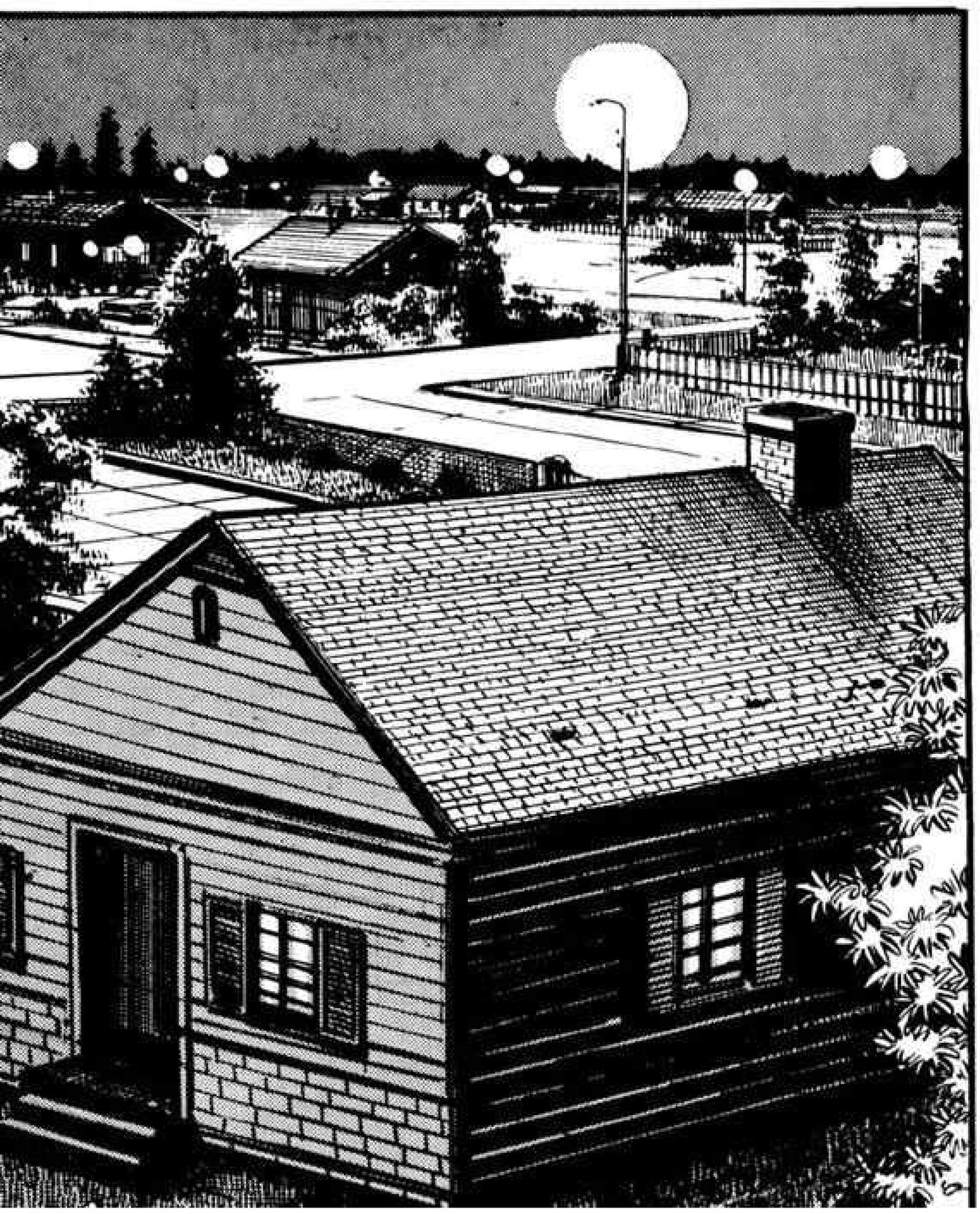
IT'S ALREADY LATE...TO BE HONEST, I'M WORRIED HE'LL SLIP OUT IN THE DARK...

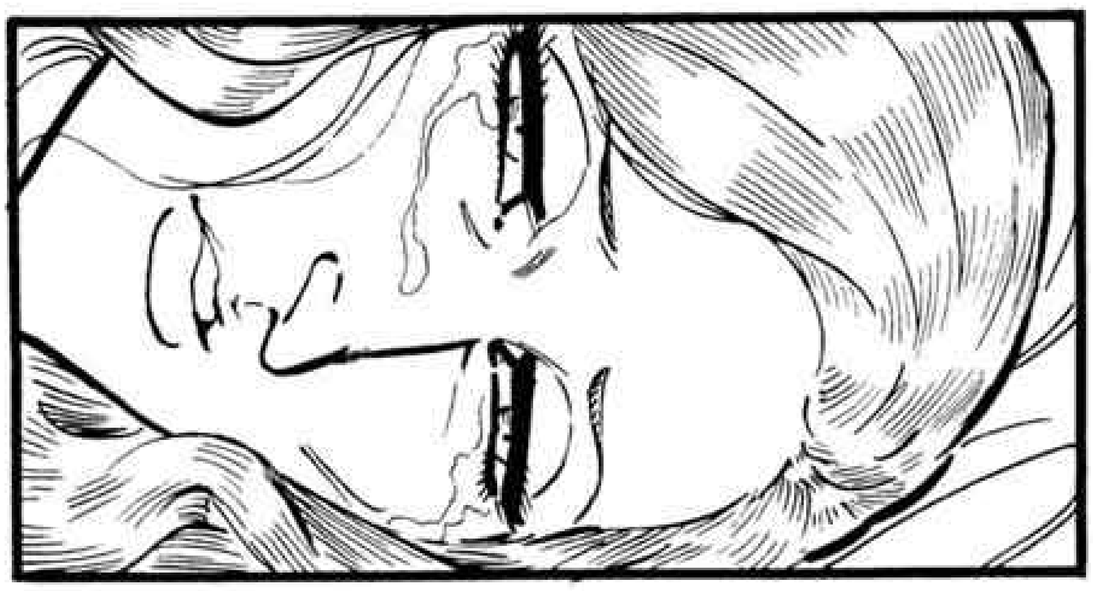
CRIME COMES FROM AN ATTITUDE, NOT AN ACT.

TONY, YOU DON'T DEAL WITH CROOKS EVERY DAY. I DO. THEY'LL SAY ANYTHING. THEY'RE MANIPULATIVE. THAT'S THE WAY THEY ARE.

.....

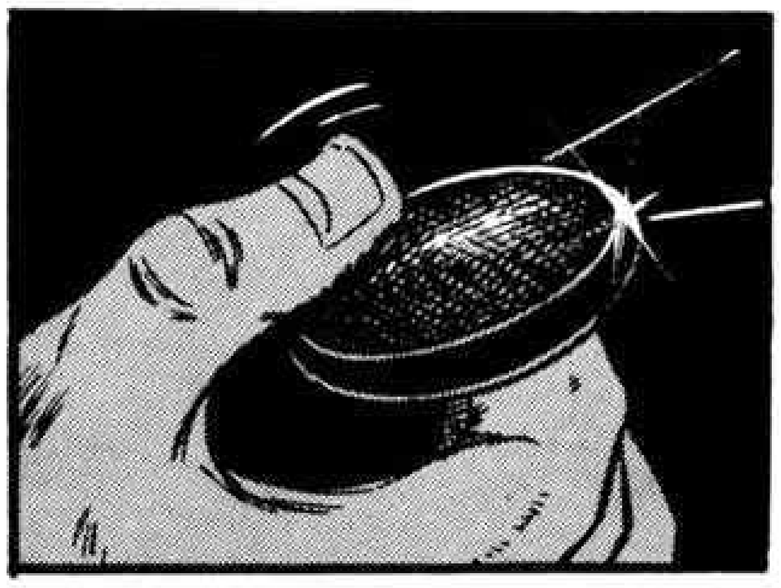
.....





PART 11

ONE WHO PROVES HIS INNOCENCE



!!

I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU, TOO.
THAT'S HOW YOU HEARD OUR CONVER-SATION.

A BUG ...

AH...

WHO ASKED YOU TO DO THIS?

FIRST LEFT, THEN RIGHT.

I WILL SHOOT YOU IN THE ARM. IN THE MEAT OF IT.

WHO WAS IT?

I...I...

AND THEN I'LL STILL HAVE TWO MORE SHOTS TO TRY.

THEN YOUR LEFT CALF, THEN YOUR RIGHT CALF.

.....

I'LL TELL YOU.

...D-DON'T.

WILSON? LET HIM GO!

...YOUR VALET HAS A MESSAGE FOR YOU.

MR. WALTERS...

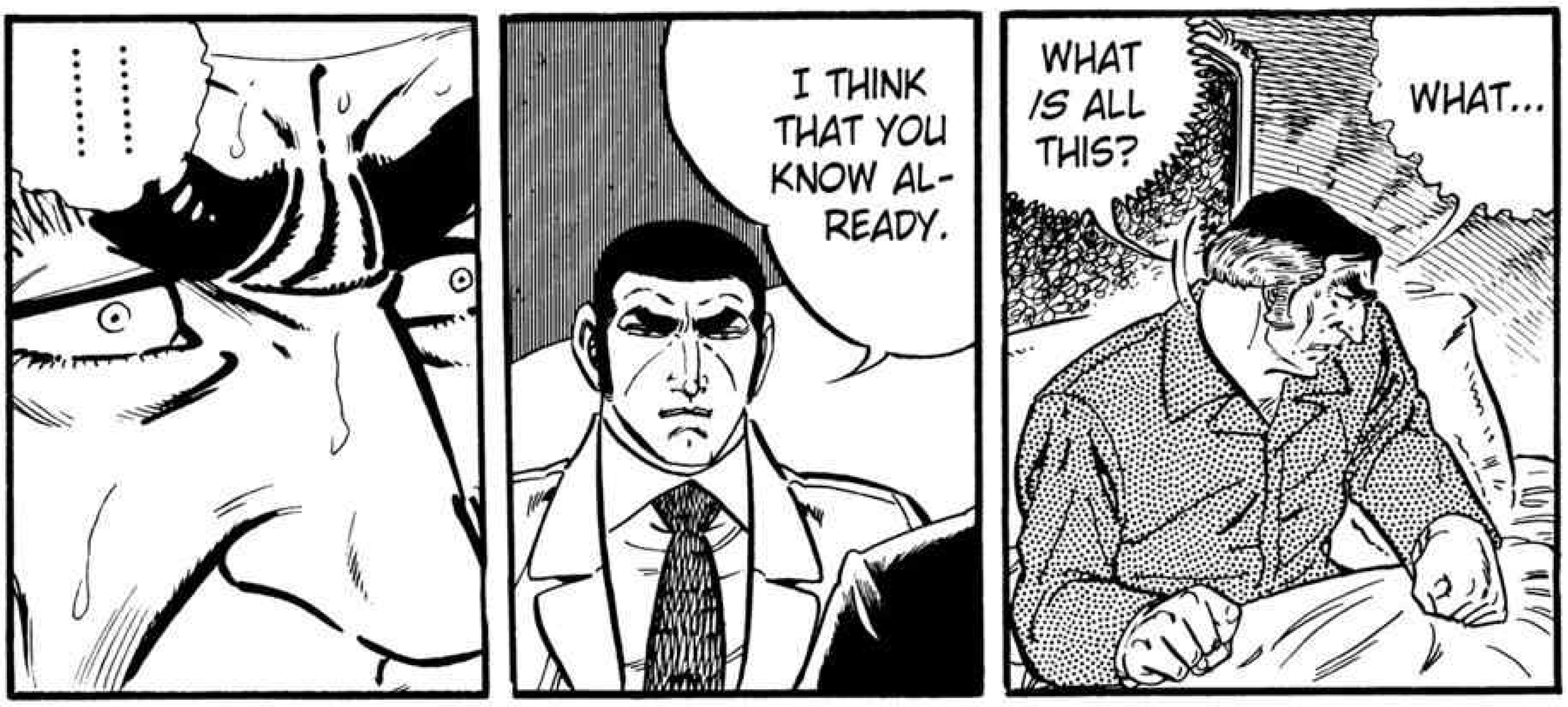
HE'S AN OLD MAN, YOU COWARD! WHAT ARE YOU DOING, SNEAKING IN HERE...

...WHY?

.....

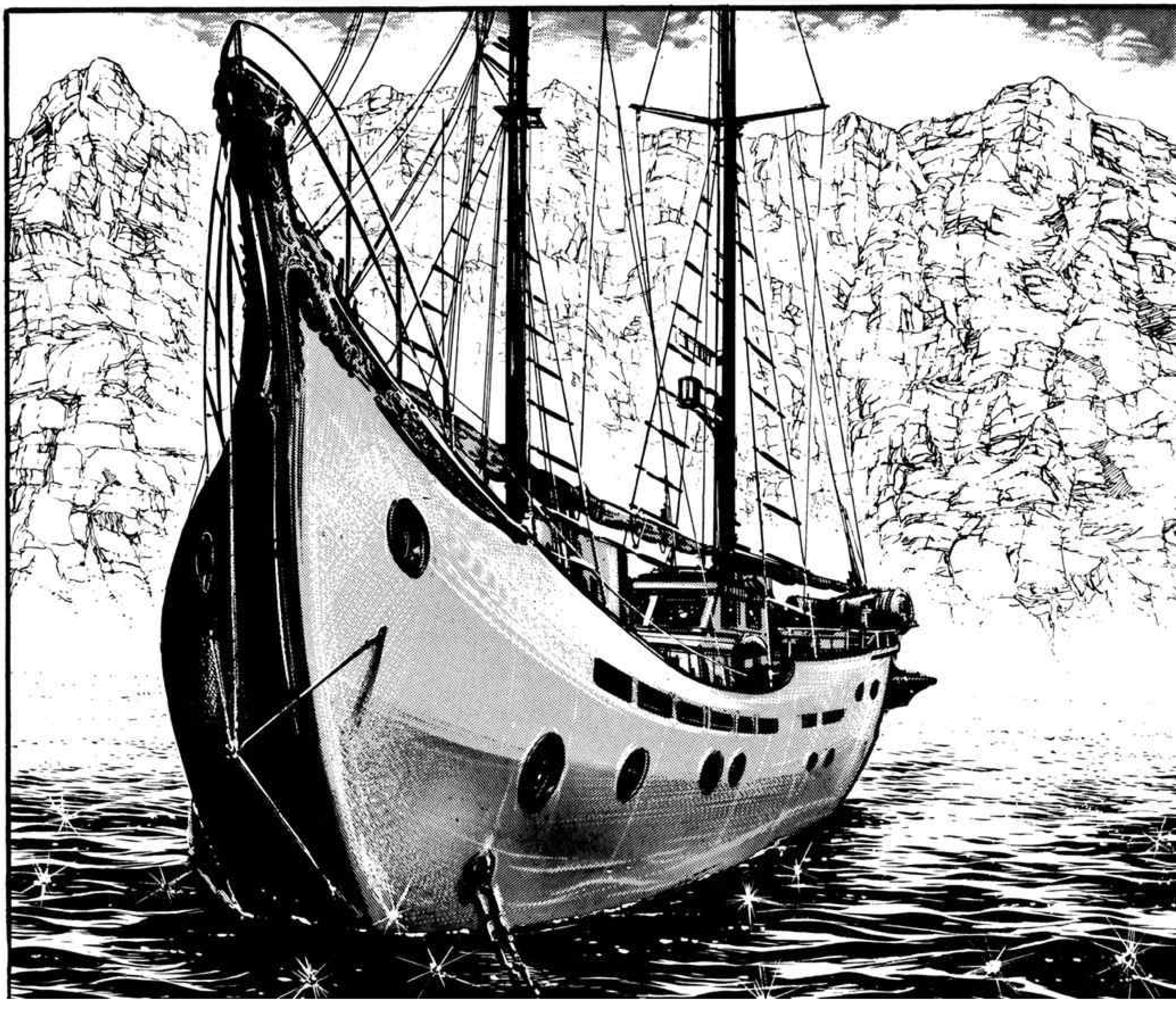
THEY FEED TO AN FM RADIO IN MY ROOM, AND ARE SUBSEQUENTLY RECORDED TO TAPE.

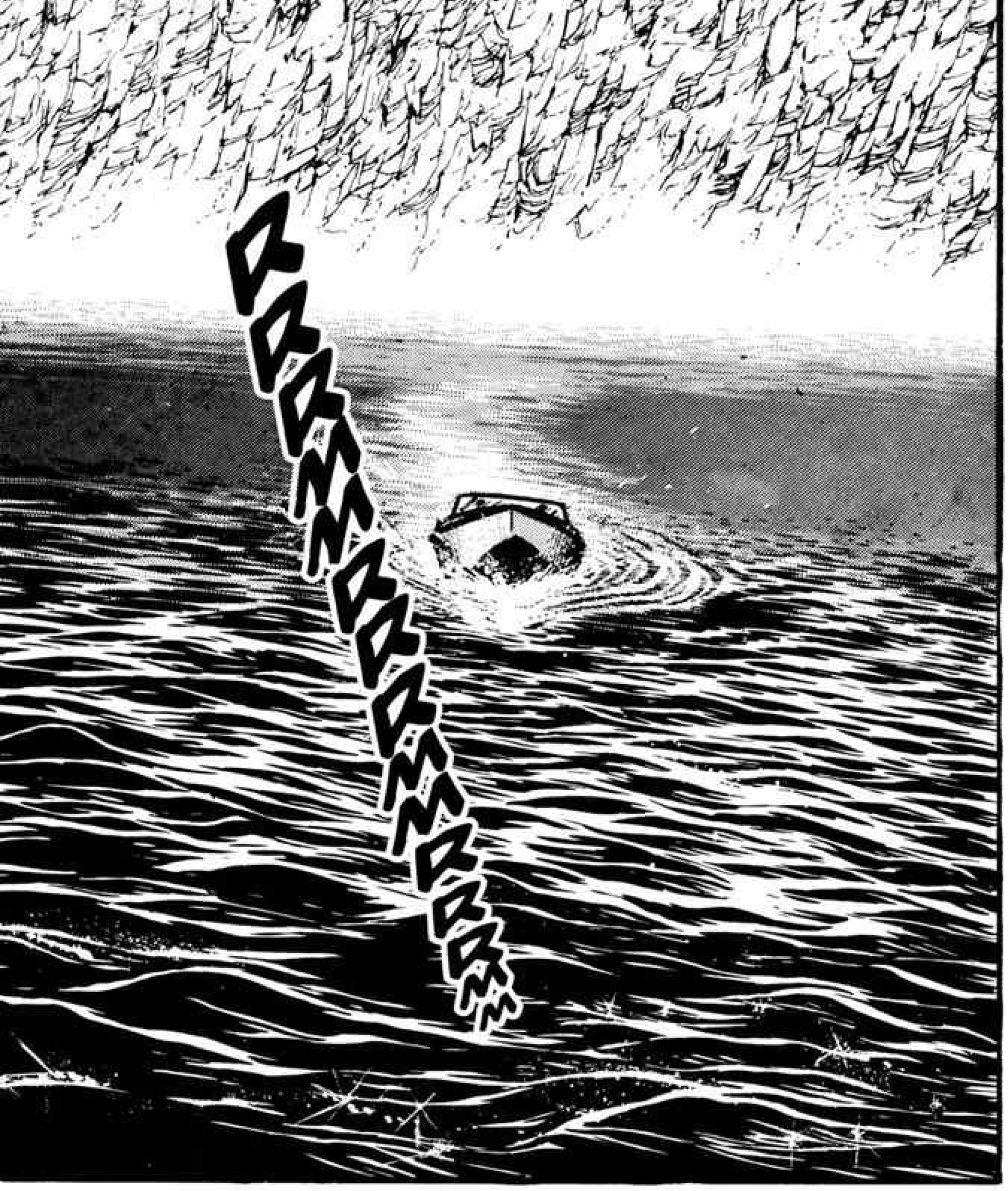
SIR...SIR, I HAVE CONNIVED TO BUG YOUR RESIDENCE. OVER THE PAST MONTH I HAVE PLACED OVER 20 LISTENING DEVICES IN THIS HOUSE.



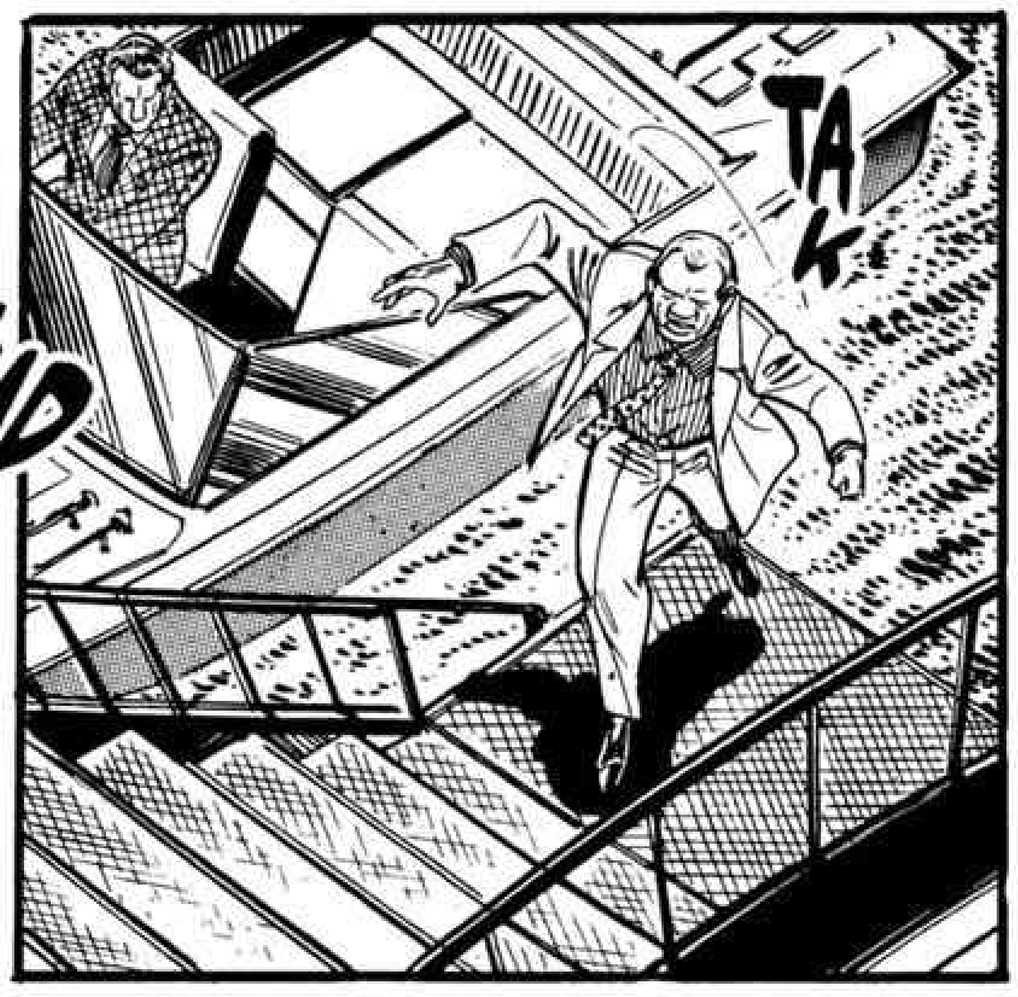

# 13

## PART 12 CROSSHAIRS TRAINED




DRRRRR
DRRRRRRR

THD
THD
THD


TA
K

LISTEN, BILL, THERE'S SOMETHING I NEED TO CONFIRM.

ALL RIGHT.

HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP? WE STILL HAVEN'T FOUND...

TONY.

WHAT DID YOU NEED TO CONFIRM?

CONFIRM ...?

I'LL SHOOT FIRST.

DON'T REACH FOR YOUR PISTOL.

I TOLD YOU, TONY, HE...

WHAT ?!

THAT GOLGO 13 WAS TELLING THE TRUTH.

T-TONY ?!

HE TOLD ME, BILL.

!

WE'LL START WITH THE FACT YOU FORCED WILSON TO BUG MY HOUSE.

THE FEDS CAUGHT A MAN IN OREGON NOT TOO LONG AGO.

IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE, BUT HE HAD EVIDENCE LINKING HIM TO THIS AREA...TO YOUR ADDRESS, TONY!

TONY...THAT'S... I NEVER *WANTED* TO PRY INTO YOUR LIFE, TONY! IT WAS MY DUTY!

!!

WILSON AND I, WE...WE WANTED TO HELP YOU OUT OF THIS, TONY...

YOURS AS WELL!

THE DEPARTMENT'S BEEN WORKING WITH THE FBI FOR A LONG TIME. BECAUSE YOU WERE INVOLVED, I WANTED TO CARRY IT OUT PERSONALLY... IT'S IN EVERYONE'S BEST INTEREST TO FIND THESE PEOPLE!

THE ORDER TO SHOOT HER?

I COULDN'T REFUSE THE ORDER!

TONY, I KNOW WHAT YOU MUST THINK OF ME... BUT THIS WAS A THREAT TO OUR COUNTRY. YOU UNDER-STAND!

!!

...BUT HER HEART... YOU COULD HIT THAT, I BET.

YOU WERE A MARKSMAN IN KOREA, IF I RECALL. MAYBE NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO SHOOT OFF A WOMAN'S EARRING...

TONY! THIS IS *CRAZY!*

YOU HEARD MORE THAN ELEANOR'S ROUTINES THROUGH YOUR TAP...

YOU HEARD ME HIRING GOLGO 13. YOU HEARD THE PLACE, DATE AND TIME ARRANGED.

***NO!*** THIS AND THAT ARE DIFFERENT THINGS...

BECAUSE YOU KNEW ALREADY.

HOW DID YOU HAVE SUCH A GOOD DESCRIPTION OF THE "SUSPECT"?

THERE WERE NO WITNESSES ANYWHERE NEAR GOLGO'S POSITION...

GOLGO 13!

*HE* SHOT ELEANOR!

.....

KNEW THAT *HE* HADN'T DONE IT!

??

?!

Y-YES, SIR.

WILSON!

LOOK, TONY...BE *REASONABLE!* WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I DID THIS?

WHAT DID YOU *SEE?* IN THE ***SCOPE***, BILL?

THIS WAS JUST ABOUT THE PLACE, WASN'T IT? JUST ABOUT THE PLACE ELEANOR STOOD.

WH...

DID YOU SEE WHAT SHE WAS *WEARING*, BILL?

T-TONY!

BILL!

I'M GIVING YOU A *CHANCE!*

...AH!!

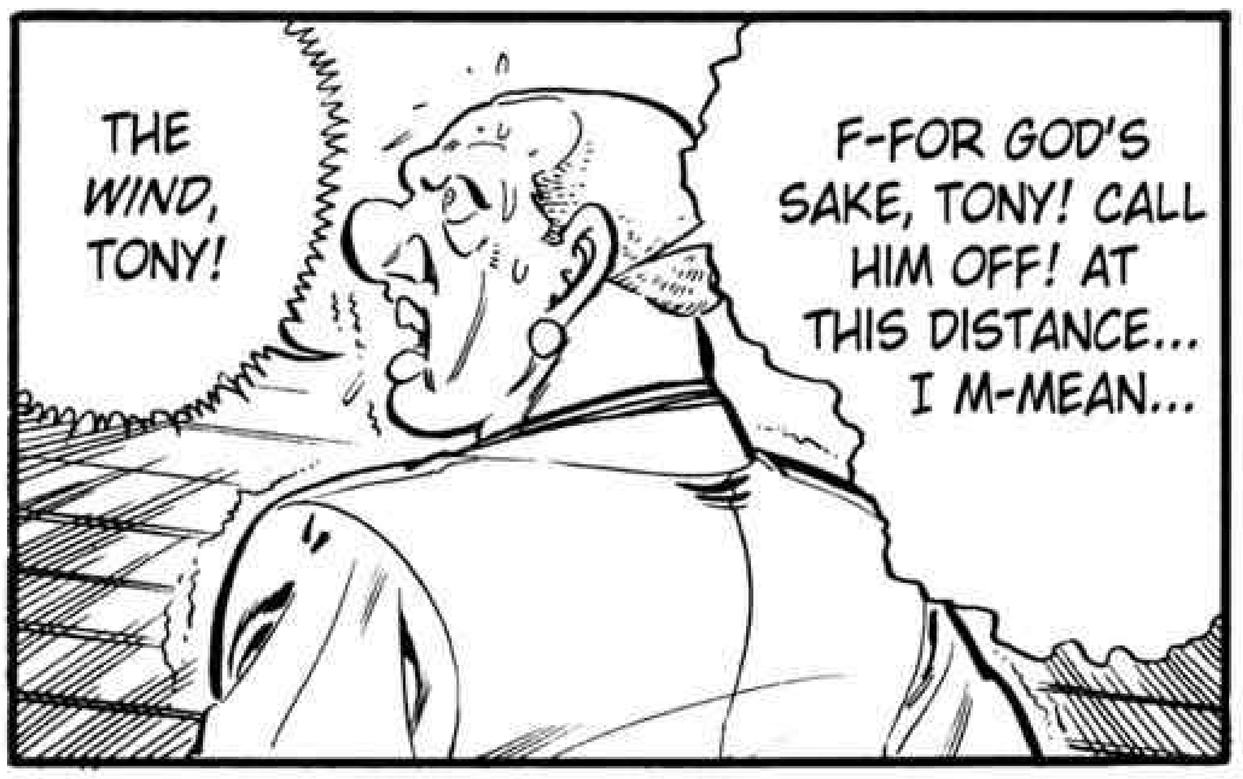
A-A CHANCE ...?

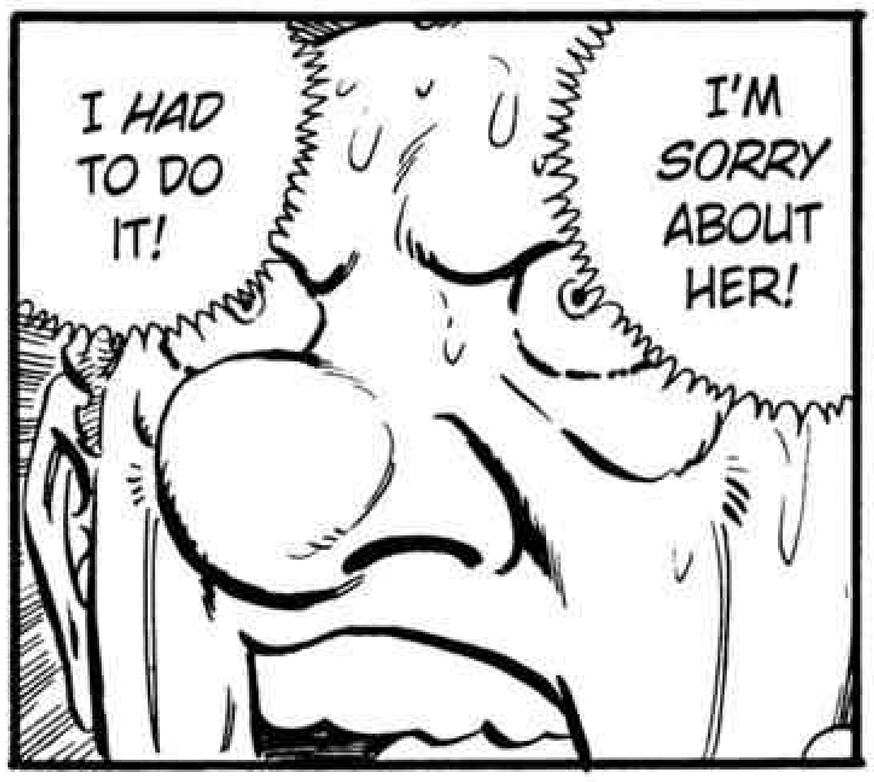
WH-WHAT DO YOU M-MEAN?!

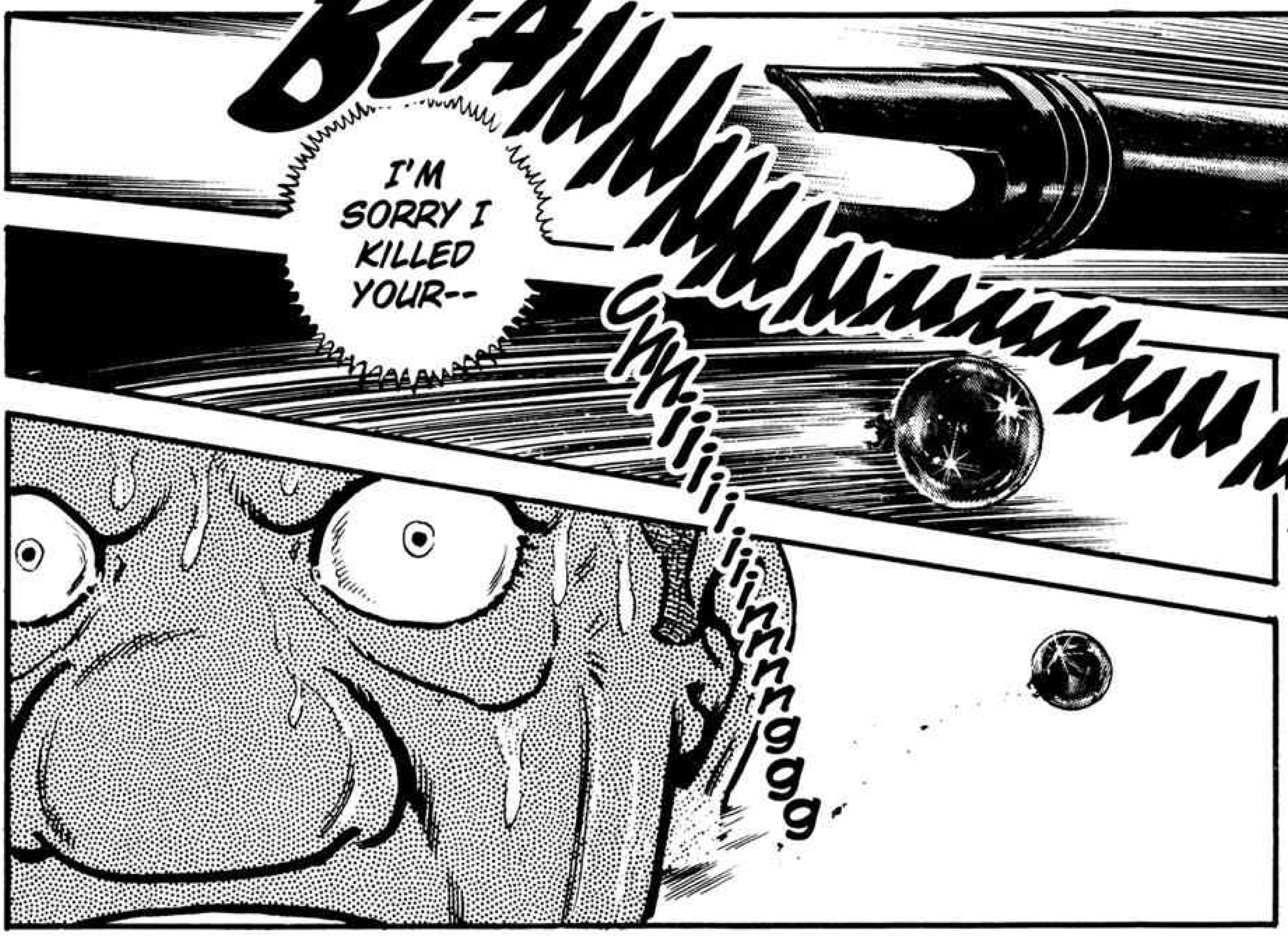
.....

BUT I WON'T... NOT AT THIS RANGE.

I'D ADVISE YOU NOT TO MOVE, BILL. EVEN GOLGO MIGHT MISS, IF YOU KEEP SHAKING LIKE THAT.





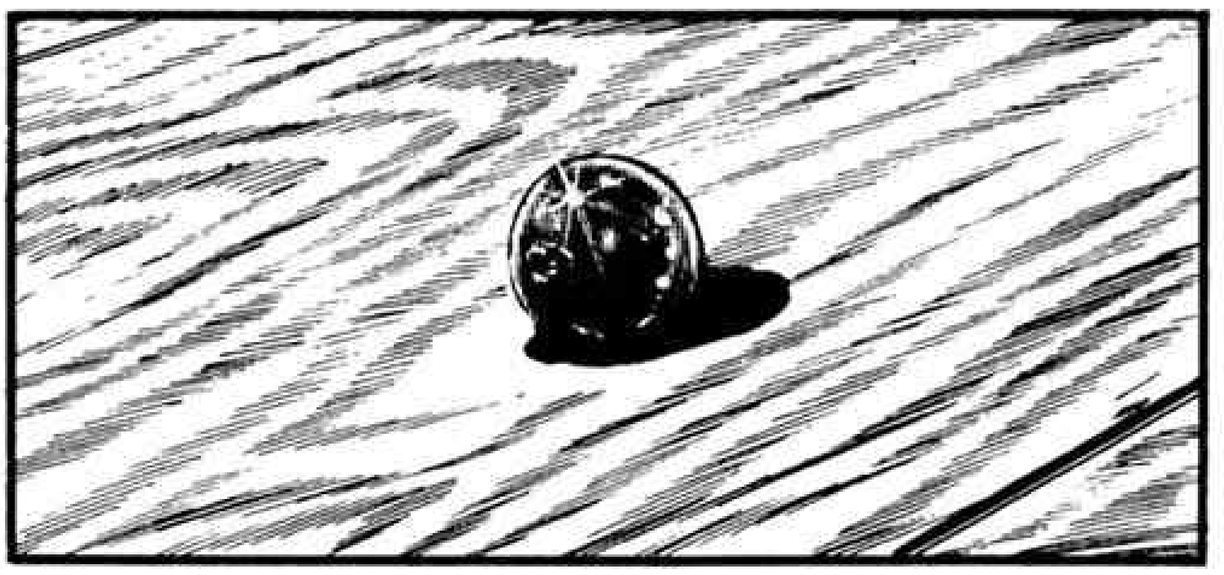


BLAM
I'M SORRY I KILLED YOUR--
Chiii

!!

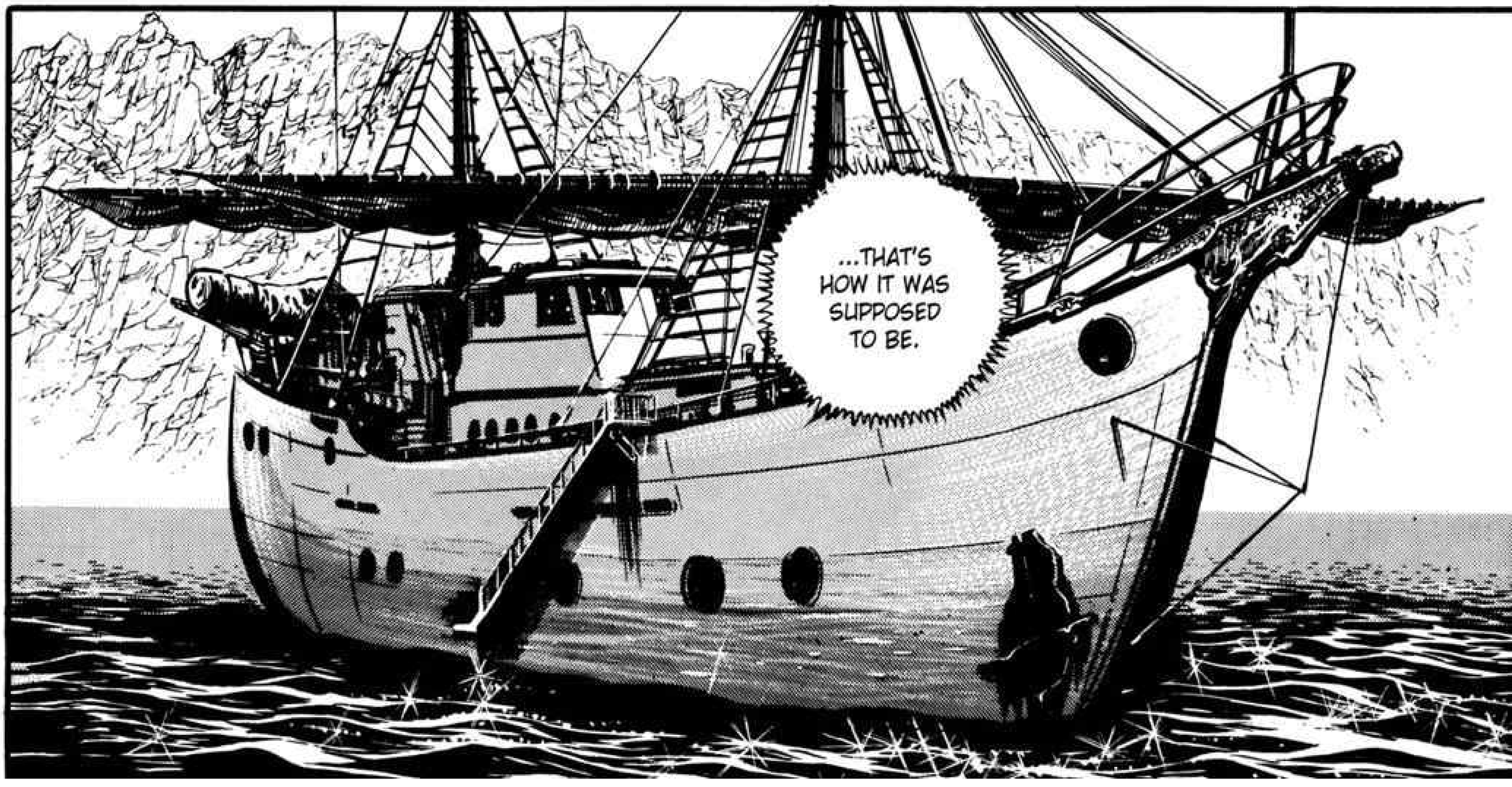
chak

hmp

SO YOU SEE, BILL...



...THAT'S HOW...


...THAT'S HOW IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE.

RRRR

END

Far from an Era
Golgo 13 Story #126, October 1977

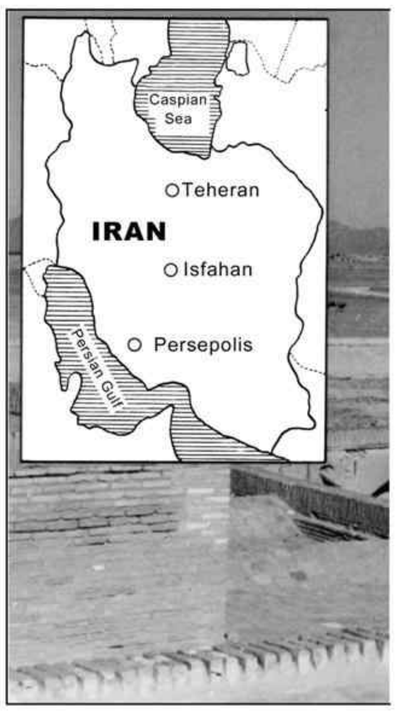
# FILE 13

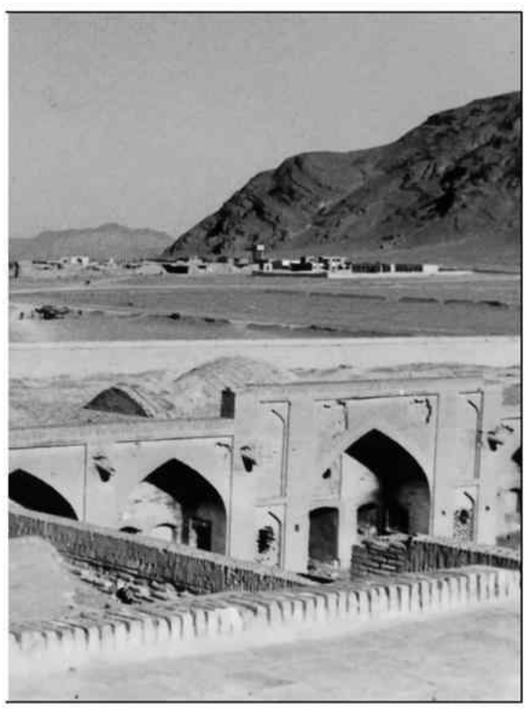
## Special:

Despite being well into its fourth decade of success as a manga, *Golgo 13* has been sparsely adapted for the screen. Readers may be aware of the two anime versions available, 1983's *Golgo 13* (*aka The Professional*), and 1998's *Golgo 13*: Queen Bee, both available in the U.S. from Urban Vision. Here we reveal the two live-action versions of *Golgo 13* shot in the 1970s, each starring hard-boiled legends of the Japanese screen!

**Sonny Chiba** **Ken Takakura**

The "Golgo Girl" co-starring with Ken in the film was herself Iranian, portrayed by actress Poori Banai. Banai (her last name is also seen spelled "Banaie" and "Banaii"; her first name, "Poorie," "Pourie," "Pouri," or "Puri"—just like Japanese, Iran's main language, Farsi, uses a non-Western writing system, so "romanization" of names can be variable) was a popular actress of 1960s and 70s Iran, before the Islamic Revolution ended her career. Banai is almost completely unknown today outside of an older generation of Iranians who remember her un-hijabbed charms fondly; she can be seen, however, in the not-*quite*-as-obscure *The Invincible Six*, a 1968 Iranian action flick starring Elke Sommer and Curt "Ballseye, Fishfinger" Jurgens—you can find it on VHS on the U.S. Amazon site for four dollars.



## Starring Ken Takakura and Poori Banai

In a bizarre instance of karma fulfilled in this life, the English-language editor's earliest memories are of Iran in 1973, the exact time and place that director Junya Sato (whose most recent film is 2005's *Otokotachi no Yamato*) was shooting the first *Golgo 13* film. Sato was a well-known director of yakuza tales; that same year saw him make gangster-turned actor Noboru Ando's *Jitsuroku Ando-gumi—Shugekihen* ("True Story of the Ando Gang—The Attacks") and it was perhaps felt this hard-boiled pedigree made him ideal to bring Ken Takakura forth as the first film incarnation of Golgo 13.

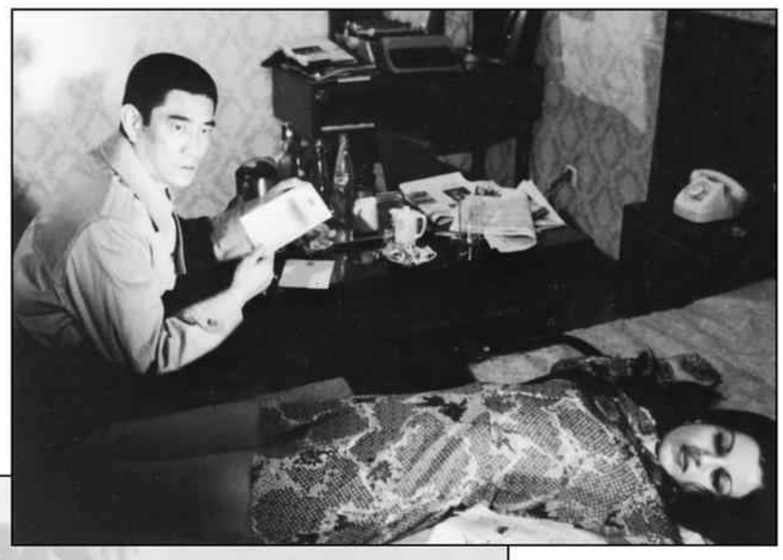
In Ian Buruma's 1983 book *Behind the Mask* (one of the first serious looks in English at Japanese popular—as opposed to "art"—culture; with its spicy photo stills from movies and manga, and a hardback price of less than a dollar on Amazon, it is *well* worth your time and money to get—trust me, you won't regret it), the author speaks of actor Ken Takakura being a hero among radical Japanese youth in the 1960s. Sometimes compared in this regard to Clint Eastwood (they are nearly the same age), the role of Golgo was a bit of a departure for an actor known to play the heroic (if reserved and lonely) gangster; yet Ken's face was a good match for Duke Togo's, and its expression one that Ian Fleming's literary James Bond also possessed: "a taciturn mask, ironical, brutal, and cold."

THE LIVE-ACTION FILMS

GOLGO 13
(1973)

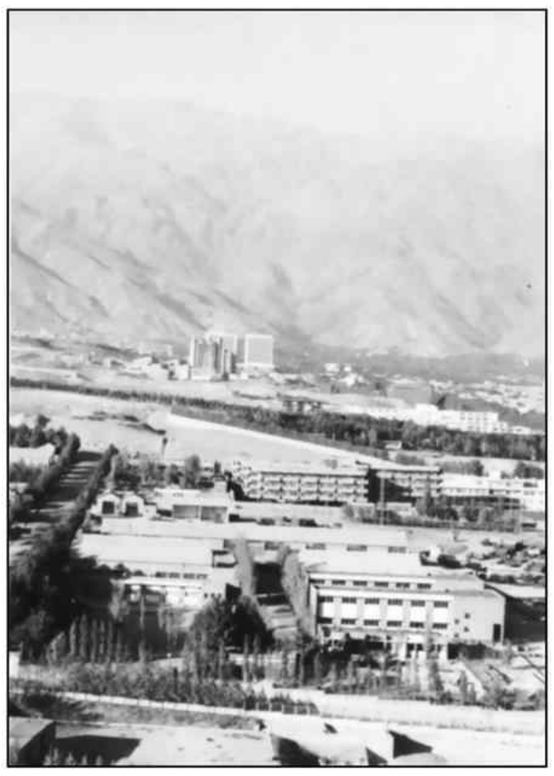
So many world leaders were invited that Golgo wouldn't even need to aim, and the fete, although perhaps unappreciated by the bearded killjoys who were to give the Shah the heave-ho not eight years later, lent a kinda sorta cosmopolitan air to prog rock-era Iran that helped to attract such "international cast" productions as *Golgo 13*. And finally, what better tribute to Golgo than to make the grade in Persia, home in medieval times of the legendary cult of killers known as the *Hashishiyun*—the word that gave the world "assassin"?

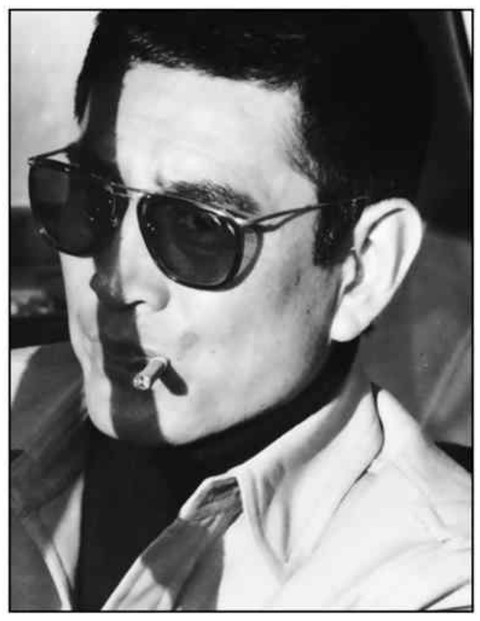
Ken Takakura's version of *Golgo 13* is not yet available on DVD, even in Japan; however, Toei did re-issue it on VHS as recently as 2002 (and Japanese video tapes, unlike DVDs, will play in any American VCR). It might be possible to special-order it through your local Japanese bookstore or through Amazon.co.jp's English-language service; the ASIN number is B000066AF8.



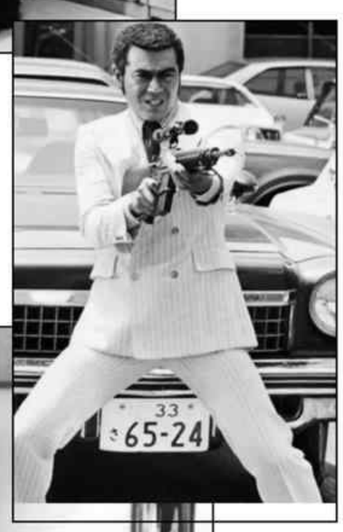
The resulting film, called simply, well, *Golgo 13*, is not only shot in Iran, it's set there, as Duke Togo is hired by the Iranian intelligence service (presumably the notorious SAVAK) to assassinate "Boa," the head of an international syndicate. Yet the question still on the mind of many readers must be—why *Iran*? Why not a more cosmopolitan setting for Golgo, such as London, Paris, or New York? The short answer is that Iran was much, much, much cheaper. A lesser-known advantage, perhaps, is that Japan has always had pretty good relations with that country, despite the Iranian scientist turning out to be an alien patsy in *Battle in Outer Space*. Even today, under the ayatollahs and such, Turks and Japanese are the only nationalities who don't need visas to enter Iran. Insert wisecrack here.

Still more, Iran in 1973 was…well, one might not exactly say *happening* or *groovy*, but they were on a definite campaign to attract tourism. The 1964 Olympics in Tokyo had been Japan's big "I Am…Somebody" to the world, but the Shah of Iran had a different way of advertising his nation. The year before *Golgo 13* began production, the Shah, in honor of the 2500th anniversary of Cyrus the Great, held a grand party amidst the ruins of the ancient capital of Persepolis in which quail eggs stuffed with caviar were washed down with bottles of *Chateau Lafite Rothschild* 1945 before an entrée of roast peacock, which, considering that the Shah sat on what was known as the Peacock Throne, seemed an ill-considered omen on the menu.



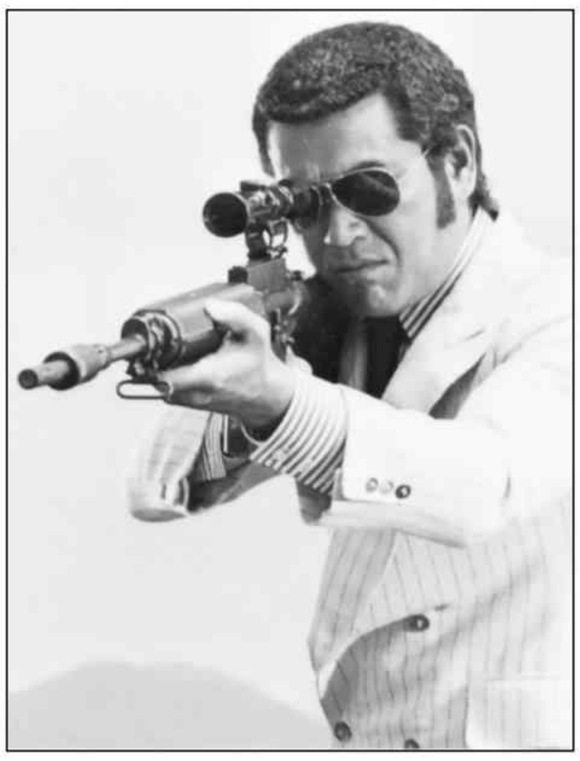


Sonny Chiba ("Hired to Kill!") is such a universally acknowledged badass that of course Patrick Macias would devote an entire chapter to him in his much-recommended book *TokyoScope: The Japanese Cult Film Companion*, available from Cadence Books. Macias properly regards *Assignment: Kowloon* (original Japanese title *Golgo 13: Kuron no Kubi*—"Golgo 13: Necks of the Nine Dragons"), directed by Yukio Noda, as a bit of a muddle plot-wise, but it possesses charm nevertheless, not least of which is its opening in Hong Kong Harbor, where Golgo's client (it's not him, but imagine a gay Desmond Llewelyn in shorts) informs a swimsuited G13 of how a certain "chap has to go" before warbling in terror as Chiba proceeds to ventilate the skulls of two idiots spying on him with binoculars, whose last words assert that he couldn't possibly shoot them at this distance.

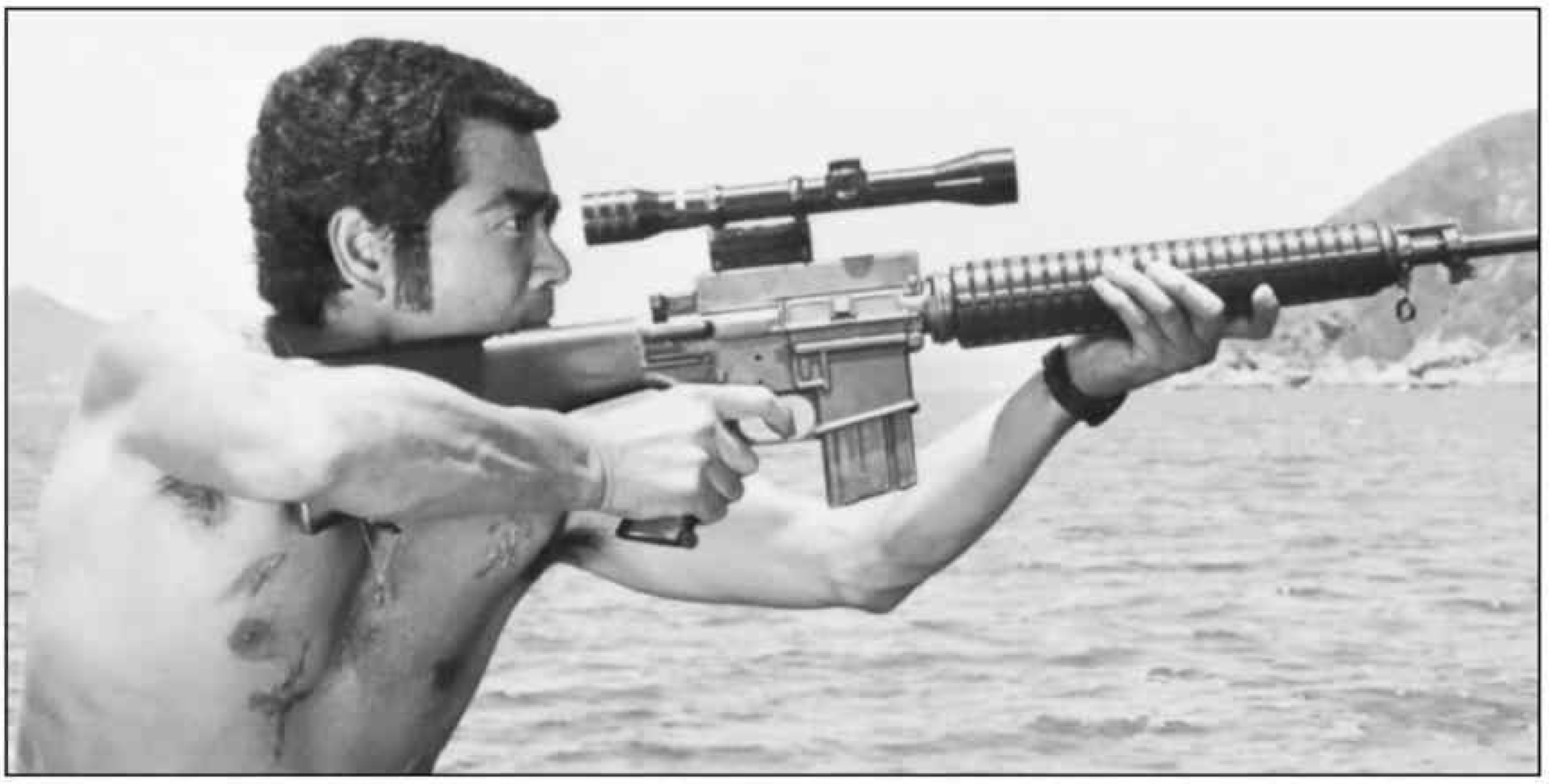


## Starring Sonny Chiba, Koji Tsuruta, and Callan Leong

Unlike the first *Golgo 13* live-action film, the second is readily available on DVD as an English dub (there is no commercial subtitled version) as part of Crash Cinema's *Kill Chiba* collection (the title and design is meant to capitalize on Chiba's charismatic but all-too-brief turn as Hattori Hanzo in *Kill Bill*). *Kill Chiba*, which can be had for less than twenty dollars online, also includes the worthwhile *Bullet Train* (seen as the inspiration for *Speed*) and *The Executioner*. Furthermore, you can find the movie by itself used on VHS on Amazon (under the title *Kowloon Assignment*) for as little as 99 cents.



# GOLGO 13
## ASSIGNMENT: KOWLOON (1977)



The man over 600 yards away from this scene **actually says:**
"*Ah, so what? That's over 600 yards!*"